STRANGER THAN FICTION

p. 81-2

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To Christian men and women all over the world whose prayers and labour of love are a source of constant inspiration to us both.

—Tom and Jean Rees.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

Jean A. Rees

HILDENBOROUGH HALL
FRINTON-ON-SEA, ESSEX

Printed in Great Britain by
BILLING & SONS LTD.
GUILDFORD AND LONDON
H4893

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Preface

WHEN, in the summer of 1938 on a preaching tour among some of the many holiday Conference Centres in Canada and the U.S.A., I came across my friends Tom and Jean Rees, I little knew that they were paying a private visit of inspection with a great purpose in mind. This purpose found its fulfilment at length in 1946 in the opening of Hildenborough Hall in Kent as the first Youth Christian Holiday Conference Centre in Britain.

It was a great venture, for conditions in this country with restricted school holiday periods and many competing interests made success problematical, but success came abundantly and I know of no enterprise more richly blessed of God among the young people of an age when spiritual approach is more difficult.

It is unique in its technique and in the wise balance maintained between its spiritual appeal and its atmosphere of freedom and sanity concerning its holiday aspect—and I ought to know, for no year has passed but I have spent at least one week (more than twenty in all) as Guest Speaker to the best and most responsive type of audience in all my travels. There is no pressure, no intense, unhealthy atmosphere tolerated, yet no week passes but young men and women enter into a real spiritual experience of Christ and others leave with a quickened zest and greatly strengthened purpose to live devoted lives to His glory. And they are doing so in all corners of the world.

Of course, this is largely the outcome of two remarkable personalities. There is no one quite like Tom Rees, and as for his versatile wife—incomparable! And they both love their Lord with all their hearts and love young people in consequence.

But it's hard work, even with the help of a wonderful staff, and they need all the support we can give them in prayer and sympathy.

God bless Hildenborough!

MONTAGUE GOODMAN.

SEVENOAKS, KENT.

Foreword

JEAN'S first story of behind the scenes at Hildenborough Hall, *Putting Ten Thousand to Flight,* was used of God to strengthen the faith of many ordinary people like ourselves, and what is more, God used to stimulate prayer interest in the work that God has committed to Jean and me both in the Hildenborough Conferences and in the wider ministry of Evangelism. God grant that this new volume may be similarly used.

I never lose the thrill of preaching the Gospel to a crowded congregation, and as long as I live I shall always concentrate on doing the work of an Evangelist, but after spending the last twelve summers running holiday Conferences for British men and women, I have come to the conclusion that although a Conference is not so spectacular as an Evangelistic Campaign, its impact is far more lasting and more far-reaching. In a Campaign we win people for Christ, but at a Conference we not only win them for Christ, but inspire and teach them to win others. D. L. Moody once said "the man who sets ten men to work is worth more than the man who does ten men's work."

Every day we thank God for the wonderful staff of helpers we have at Hildenborough Hall, and the many Christian friends at home and overseas who support us so faithfully with their prayers.

TOM REES.

HILDENBOROUGH HALL,
December, 1957.

1 Latter House Glory

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace.—Haggai II, 9.

LOOKING out of my window through the trees over the Greensward to the sparkling sea, watching the picturesque barges with their colourful sails ploughing between Colchester, Harwich and Yarmouth, it seems only yesterday that the idea of a Christian Conference Centre was born. Yet it is nearly twenty years ago that we first received the conviction that we were to open Britain's First Permanent Young People's Holiday Conference Centre. Of course we didn't call it that then; we only referred to the idea as "our mansion". It is quite amusing to remember what a different atmosphere we were in when this idea came to us. Could anything be more of a contrast from Frinton than Atlantic City, U.S.A.? The description of Frinton in the 1898 Guide Book could still stand today, where it says "Frinton is essentially quiet and reposeful. Bands, Pierrots and all the gay allurements so attractive to the tripper are conspicuous by their absence." But in Atlantic City, U.S.A., there is no attraction, no garish amusement, that can be conceived by the ingenious American mind that is conspicuous by *its* absence! Everything was there that day in 1938, from the gay lights, the slot machines; there was even a lady who was shot from the cannon every night at 6 o'clock promptly! And yet it was in that place, walking along the famous boardwalk (promenade), that Tom and I first realised that, with God's help, we were to open a Conference Centre.

What a lot has happened since those days. As I see the little packet steamers ploughing between Harwich and the Hook I look back to the days when planes travelled across that very sea, leaving in their wake death and destruction. Since those days thrones have toppled, cities have been wiped out, dictators

have risen to unbelievable heights of bestial cruelty and arrogance, only to sink in a short time to greater depths of humiliation. Mussolini, once fancied by students of prophecy as the coming Roman Emperor and the Beast of Revelation, did not end his days even with the dignity of a Napoleon, but as an object of ridicule at the hands of his own people. Hitler, megalomaniac of Berchtesgaden, died by his own hand like a rabbit in a warren under the ruins of his own conquered capital. But Britain, still *Great* Britain, after standing alone against the combined might of what was virtually the rest of the world, like a modern Horatius, has come through the struggle battle-scarred but undefeated, and where other thrones have fallen the crown of England shines even brighter on the head of the new Elizabeth, the young Queen who, on the eve of her Coronation, humbly asked the world to pray for her on that great day.

Yes, a great deal of history has been written and tremendous events have taken place since Tom and I, a newly married couple, decided to launch out in faith and open a Conference Centre, and today we are seeing fulfilled the promise that was given to us when we moved from the former house, that mansion of ours in Kent, to this "latter house", when the Lord promised us that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former", and by "glory" we mean glory given to the Lord's name and not any glory to ourselves or to our fellow workers.

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Now don't imagine that we have been running a Conference Centre for twenty years. It was eight years after that day in Atlantic City, in June 1946, when we welcomed our first guests. Tom and I both suffer from a surfeit of ideas; mercifully the majority of these are stillborn and others die in early infancy, which is as well, or Tom and I would be cut off in our prime and so would our fellow workers! But this idea of the Conference Centre survived the false "peace in our time" of 1938, the phoney war of 1939 and 1940 and then the serious war-time days until 1945. But the idea never died, and I think the whole plan was strengthened and deepened by those years of preparation, prayer and time for detailed planning that were given to us, so that when we did start the Conference Centre in 1946 it was done on no sudden tide of enthusiasm but the result of literally years of thought, prayer and planning.

They say that seeing is believing, and as far as Frinton is concerned that was very true. Until 1952 neither Tom nor I had ever seen Frinton, and although we had been told a great deal about it we didn't really believe it was true. I can look back now and see myself sitting in the office at Hildenborough Hall in Kent with Miss Frances Hay, opening a number of long envelopes. It was October and Miss Hay and I were having our annual attack of deciding that we really ought to move to the sea. We had been at Hildenborough in Kent for five or six years. When we had started in Kent the seaside was not popular. In 1946 many of the seaside places were still enclosed in barbed wire, with great concrete defence blocks marring the view, and people still tended to go inland. But as the years went on it became more and more obvious that people did not consider they had had a holiday unless they had been to the sea. So, with the season practically over and Tom away preaching in America, Miss Hay and I decided once again that we should try to find a place at the sea and, on Tom's return, suggest a round of visits to suitable places. So here we were faced with a pile of long envelopes of Particulars.

"Here's a good one at Bournemouth," says Miss Hay. "Accommodation for two hundred, right on the sea front. They're only asking two hundred thousand for it."

"Is that all?" I replied. "Well, never mind, Bournemouth's a little far away from London. But here's one at Brighton—'Be right on the sea front in an hour' they say."

But then we both thought of Brighton; in the winter it would be all right, but in the height of the season Brighton or Eastbourne or Hove or Worthing, or any of those south coast places, delightful as they might be, would be impossible as the venue of a Christian Conference Centre. Crowds of people, masses of summer attractions, everything to distract the mind from the things we were trying to teach. It was one thing to take a party on an excursion to the seaside for a day, and then to bring them back into the quiet atmosphere of our estate in Kent where people could think, could consider, and have time to take stock spiritually, but to be there all the time was something quite different. As we went through these Particulars and even visited a number of the places hopefully, we reluctantly came to the conclusion that there was no seaside place within reasonable reach of London that would suit our purpose. Which just goes to prove how ignorant we were, and also how

it is possible to believe a thing in your head without it affecting your conduct. For we had been told all about Frinton. Friends who had been there had described it to us, had gone into ecstasies about it. We had listened to eulogies of Frinton until we were tired, but we had never seen Frinton so we did not believe it, and if you are a budding preacher you will find a good illustration here if you care to look for it. It is quite true that Frinton has to be seen to be believed.

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But I am going on far too fast. I feel at this point I ought to say "New readers start here". Many of you have never heard of Hildenborough Hall and some of you who are reading this book have never heard of Tom Rees, certainly not of his wife Jean, and you are wondering "What are these people talking about?" "What is a Conference Centre?" So perhaps I had better start at the beginning and tell you all about it.

Many years ago my husband Tom, Thomas Bonner Rees to give him his full name, was born in Blackburn in Lancashire, simply because his parents happened to be there at the time. And in the fulness of time he and I met on a young people's Holiday Houseparty and worked together on quite a number of occasions. And although our personalities clashed and we differed sharply on many subjects, we were drawn together by one important thing: we were both firmly convinced that to serve the Lord wholly it was very much better to be single than to be married. As we recognised this in each other as a genuine conviction, we got on exceedingly well until we discovered to our mutual surprise and, I can sincerely say, to our mutual annoyance, that we had fallen in love with each other. The late Bishop Taylor Smith had a great piece of advice which he gave to young men, so I am told. It was, "Don't get married unless you can't possibly help it." Perhaps this is the reason that our marriage has been so happy. We both tried very hard to avoid it, but when Tom discovered the text "One of you shall chase a thousand and two of you shall put ten thousand to flight", even simple mathematical brains like ours realised that two working together was a better proposition.

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When Tom proposed to me, in an attempt to be very fair he tried to put to me the horrors of marrying an evangelist, of the loneliness when he would have to go away and preach, of the

uncertainty of life, of the hard work involved. But this is only half of the story. When one feels called to serve the Lord, to marry someone who is in "the same line of business" is ideal. I must admit that when I was first married I thought rather wistfully of the stories I had read of the little wife who says good-bye to the husband in the morning, and he sets off with his bowler hat and carefully rolled umbrella, and then of her happy anticipation of his return at night, having spent the day in great culinary efforts ready for the happy reunion in the evening. But there is a great deal to be said for the life that is shared, and we have enjoyed this to an even greater extent since we have run a Conference Centre together. We have so much in common to discuss. There is no part of our lives that is hidden from each other. In fact, as my daughter Jennifer tells me, we tend to turn even the meals we have together on our own into Committee Meetings when we talk "shop".

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Tom was never one to do things by halves. When he left school he threw himself into a life of pleasure and managed to have a really good time. He had a delightful circle of friends and in this large social circle dances and parties were constantly arranged. Most of his evenings were spent either at a dance or a show. And it was when the enjoyment of this life was at its height that his brother Dick, together with some of his friends, to use a slang expression, "ganged up" on Tom. Dick had been a Christian for some years and was tremendously burdened for his brother and confided this to a number of friends, and they all covenanted together to pray every day until Tom became a Christian.

Not long ago Tom was at a meeting in Croydon and after the meeting a lady came up to him and said: "I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Rees, because tonight I have come to see an answer to my prayers." Tom waited for the explanation and she told him that years ago her son on returning from camp confided to her that he had promised to pray every day for a man called Tom Rees. He had promised this man's brother, the Rev. Dick Rees, that he would pray each day for the conversion of his brother. This lady said that she too joined in praying for Tom Rees whom she had never met, and prayed on for many years until she heard indirectly that her prayer had been answered. But one day, going through

Croydon, she saw a bill outside a church announcing that the speaker was none other than Tom Rees, and so she said, "I came tonight to see an answer to prayer."

And it was the believing prayer of Dick that, humanly speaking, was responsible for Tom's conversion. Anyone less interested in spiritual things at the time of his conversion than Tom would have been difficult to find. He had a very gay Christmas and New Year programme planned, and then suddenly he was conscious of the fact that the desire for such things had suddenly left him. It wasn't that he and his friends were not a good living crowd. They were morally upright, they wouldn't have dreamt of getting drunk, but they just wanted to enjoy themselves, and Tom suddenly found that this kind of life had no purpose in it. It seemed to have "no future". The prayers of Dick and his friends were beginning to be answered. And then after a long time of dissatisfaction and careful thought Tom decided that the only thing to do was to yield himself to Christ, which he did alone in the quiet of his own bedroom. Then he went across to Dick's room to tell him the news. I think he quite expected that Dick would faint, so standing by ready to catch him he said:

"Dick, I want to tell you that I have become a Christian. I have committed my life to Christ."

Dick slowly took off his glasses and said, "I'm not surprised."

"You're not surprised?" asked Tom. "I thought you'd faint."

"Oh no," said Dick, "I have been praying and I expected an answer to my prayers."

It is very often quite different, isn't it? We pray earnestly for someone's conversion and then when it happens we can't believe it's true. If we pray believing, we can have confidence in the Lord that He will answer our prayers.

As I have said before, Tom was never one to do anything by halves, and having become a Christian he assumed that the obvious thing to do was to put everything he had into it. He was very fortunate in the fact that a Church Army worker, Sister Stubbings, was on the spot to push him in at the "deep end". Having heard of his conversion, she immediately press-ganged him into speaking at a children's meeting, praying at the prayer meeting, visiting twenty public houses each Saturday night with her, and having got a taste for Christian work

there was no holding Tom. With some friends he opened a coffee room for drunks on Saturday nights; he became Superintendent of a Sunday School, ran open-air meetings, and, in place of the dances his friends had held, started Squashes on Sunday nights in the group which he called the "Pro Deo", and very soon numbers of the social circle who had formerly enjoyed the dances and shows were themselves converted and formed a Bible Class and sought ways of winning their other friends for Christ.

It was when Tom was working in an estate agent's office that he was so inundated with invitations to preach and with opportunities for evangelistic work that he was called to devote the whole of his life to evangelism, and first of all became a Lay Worker at Sevenoaks Parish Church in charge of the youth work there. Later on he accepted an invitation to work on the staff of the Children's Special Service Mission and Scripture Union.

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After we had the vision of a Conference Centre during our trip to America in 1938 we came home expecting to put the plan into operation straight away. But the war intervened and we answered a call to take up work in a little church in the West Country. And for three and a half years we had a wonderful time, working not only in the village itself and the district round about, but amongst hundreds of members of the Forces from the huge Air Force camp nearby, and among the soldiers who were billeted in our village. We had a thrilling time there. It was in a way like a three and a half years' continuous mission. There were times of sowing and times of reaping, but all the time men, women and young people were being converted, and some outstanding cases caused quite a stir.

It was there that we first put into operation the idea which we have used many times since, of forming a Gideonites' Prayer Fellowship. We had decided to have a Mission at Easter, and early in the year we got together the Christian people and said that, although we were going to pray regularly and daily for the Mission, we wanted a small group of people who would band themselves together, whatever the sacrifice, and agree to pray daily not only for the Mission but for three definite people in the village whom they knew were not Christians. These Gideonites also promised to pray once a week with

another Gideonite and to attend the Gideonites' meeting when we discussed personal work and had a time of prayer. Twenty people signed on the dotted line and really gave themselves to prayer and to work. It was quite astonishing the things that happened. To the great surprise of many, people were converted long before the Mission started and they in their turn became soul winners. As Tom visited the houses in his regular weekly visitations people would say, "Come in, Mr. Rees. I have been expecting you. I want to become a Christian." And in almost every case we found it was someone who was what we called a Gideonite Prayee.

The prayers of those few people did something in that village. There was such a sense of the Lord's presence in the place that a soldier walking through the village on his way to Cheddar for no apparent reason was suddenly convicted of sin, even as he walked through the village, and thought of the days when he used to go to Salvation Army meetings, and longed for someone to help him. His soul cried out to God. As he came through the village someone gave him an invitation to come and hear Tom preach at Cheddar the following day. I can see him now, sitting at the very back, and from the opening hymn of the meeting sitting with tears streaming down his cheeks. At the end of the meeting Tom pointed him to Christ. I am convinced that if the people of a church or a village or a district could band themselves together in believing prayer, really sacrificial prayer, and put from their lives the things that were hindering blessing, asking the Lord for a real burden of prayer for their own Church, that they would see this touch of revival that came to us in the West Country. But the trouble most of the time is that we are not willing. We are not willing for the trouble and for the upheaval that this kind of praying and work causes, and although we are quite willing to have systematic prayer meetings we are not willing to pay the price.

After the three and a half years in the village Tom felt the urge once again to go out and conduct missions all of his time, so he went over to Northern Ireland towards the end of the war and conducted a number of crusades in many of the leading towns. These Victory Crusades, as they were called in Ulster, culminated immediately after the war in the campaign Tom held in the Central Hall, Westminster, in 1945. It was at a psychological moment just at the end of the war, when people

Tom and Jean Rees

Hildenborough Ha

Tom Rees

were unaccustomed to big meetings, and London was full of young people in the Forces. I think that was why it was so specially blessed. Out of these meetings grew the Albert Hall Rallies and at the same time we opened the Conference Centre in Kent.

THIS afternoon I was reminiscing with Miss Frances Hay over the old days at Kent and the Conferences at Frinton, and I said to her:

"Do you think if we had our time over again and we knew all the problems and the ups and downs and alarms and excursions that we would have to encounter, do you think we would still start a Conference Centre?"

She considered for a moment and said: "Yes, I think if we were still twenty-nine, we would."

I said: "In spite of the staff problems and the rationing problems, increasing costs and financial difficulties?"

"Yes," she said, "I think so, if we were called to it." And there I think you have the crux of the whole thing, for Miss Frances Hay was as certainly called to work at Hildenborough as we were, and it is with no hesitation that I say that had it not been for Miss Hay, Tom and I could never have started the Conference Centre or carried it on for these last twelve or thirteen years.

Frances Hay had just passed her twenty-ninth birthday when I met her. She was one of those inspirations that sometimes come to you. When we had been planning the Conference Centre, Tom knew that she was the person to invite to come as our manageress, and in spite of home problems Miss Hay, too, heard the call to join us and the years have proved how exactly ideal she has been for the job. She has enormous executive ability: to ask her to see to anything is to assume with confidence that it is already done. She rules the staff with a rod of iron and yet they are all devoted to her. She has an enormous interest in all departments, the spiritual no less than the catering and housekeeping departments. We always say that Miss Hay moved in with the furniture. She arrived at Hildenborough Hall in Kent on the 6th November, 1945, the day the furniture moved in, and it says a great deal for her strength of character and for her determination that she did not turn tail and go back to Ireland, with the enormity of the task that confronted her.

We tend to forget now, when we can order almost anything we want (provided, of course, that we have the money), how difficult it was in those days. The food situation in 1946 was exceedingly difficult and even furniture was on the docket system, but our determination was the same as it is now: that our guests should have the best possible food available. We bought Jersey cows so that they could have cream. We had hoped to raise pigs, but here the Government were not very co-operative. We were allowed to keep two pigs provided that they were personally looked after by the Director and that they were only eaten by him and his family! It was not our idea to sit and eat pork as a family or for Tom to leave the Word of God and serve pigsties!, so we gave up the idea and concentrated on hens and turkeys, and it was by constant planning and ingenuity throughout those early years that we were able to build up the reputation, which I think is justified, of providing our guests with really good food. I have lost count of the number of times guests have written from well-known leading hotels, saying,

"We're getting on all right here, but Hildenborough has spoilt us for the food."

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We had a very happy nine years in Hildenborough Hall in Kent. We had thirty-two acres of ground, much of which was parkland and wood, but a great deal was cultivated, with long sloping lawns, flower beds, an ornamental lake, a miniature golf course, a croquet lawn and a tennis court. This required a great deal of care and involved employing a number of gardeners. I think Tom might well have been justly proud as he viewed Hildenborough Hall, Kent, nine years after our moving in, remembering the wilderness that it was when we arrived, where most of the grounds had been allowed to grow wild for the six years during the war, and yet by the time we left Hildenborough Hall in Kent there was scarcely a weed to be seen; the whole place was fit for an exhibition.

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One of the advantages of Hildenborough in Kent was the fact that we were so near to London. Only twenty-eight miles made it possible for us to run the Evangelistic work in London very conveniently, and as the Conferences developed so the Evangelistic work, particularly in London, grew with it. We found in an increasing measure that the Conference work and

the Evangelistic work supplemented each other. We could make the contacts at the big London meetings and other campaigns, and then they would come to a Conference and be built up in the faith. They in their turn would go away inspired to pray and work, and we often found that many of our best helpers in the Albert Hall Rallies were those who had been Hildenborough young people. We were able to hold weekend Conferences for workers, practical training weekends, and weekend Conferences for new converts.

The Lord has certainly been wonderfully good to us in sending us such a grand staff. I cannot think what Tom would have done all these years without the invaluable help of his secretary, Joyce Silcox. It was as a child of fourteen on a Children's Mission at Seaford, when Tom was the leader and I was running a girls' camp, that Joyce was converted in a cinema service. Many years afterwards we were introduced to her at our campaign in the Central Hall, Westminster, and Joyce joined us when we opened the Conference Centre.

How the Lord guided us in inviting Elizabeth Smith to join the staff! She first came as an assistant cashier, and later she took charge of the entire accounts and now is the Secretary of the Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust. I always maintain she has a brain like a man, though Tom assures me she has a brain like two men, and she lifts a tremendous load of responsibility for the business side from his shoulders. She is ably assisted by Mary Bullock from Shrewsbury, and the two of them make a splendid partnership. It is grand to know that the finance department is so efficiently run.

In each department the right person seems to be sent to us to help us in the way needed. I remember some years ago Tom had a rally in Ipswich, on Good Friday. It was one of those rallies from which Tom came home rather depressed. There had been little apparent result, and if there is one thing irritates Tom it is when people say to cheer him up, "Eternity alone will reveal what is done at the rally." Sometimes he says, "It will keep even eternity busy to reveal anything from *that* meeting!" And he came home feeling that this meeting had been somewhat fruitless.

"There didn't seem to be many young people there," he said, "and nothing seemed to happen." But the interesting fact was this, that when we moved to Frinton and advertised for some extra secretarial help and someone to help with our book

department, the girl who applied, Sheila Simpson, told us that she had been converted at that very rally. It was so nice not to have to wait for eternity to reveal the excellent result of that rally! Sheila has been with us ever since and her help in every way has proved invaluable.

My own secretaries have a distressing tendency to get married. I have had more than thirteen since we started running a Conference Centre, the majority of whom have been married since. I feel this is possibly because I write novels and the secretaries who help me get inside information on the technique of falling in love and also, of course, have the invaluable benefit of my "Aunty Mabel" advice on the problems of the heart.

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Another member of the staff who was converted at one of the Rallies is Janet Butler. Janet helped us for some time in the kitchen as one of our cooks, and now she has taken charge of the Lodge. Hers is an interesting story. She was working at Dr. Barnardo's and was taken by a friend to one of our Rallies at the Royal Albert Hall. She had been feeling for some time that her life had no object or purpose, and at the Rally she found what she needed in Christ. The experience transformed her life to such an extent that when she went home not only her mother but her brother Barry noticed the difference.

Having found Christ for herself, Janet had a great desire that her brother Barry and his fiancée Jean should come to know the Saviour too. She rather diffidently suggested to him when she was next home that he and Jean should attend a Rally, but he was emphatic in his refusal. Even if he himself were willing to come, Jean wouldn't hear of it. At last Janet persuaded him to allow her to send for some tickets, and rather reluctantly he agreed to let her do so. Janet herself was on a holiday down in Dorset and told Barry that the tickets would come and urged him to make use of them. Barry was secretly rather impressed with the change in Janet's life and felt that as it seemed to mean so much to her he really ought to consider the matter, but what was his relief when the letter came from the Royal Albert Hall to say that all the seats were sold and there was no possibility of his getting a ticket. He wrote to Janet down in Dorset and told her of this, with relief between every line, but Janet was not to be put off. So great was her desire for his soul and conviction that the Lord would reach

him that she sent him a telegram on the morning of the Rally telling him to go to the Albert Hall and join the queue for unreserved seats. He had hoped that he had escaped unscathed, but to receive a telegram like this showed how tremendously in earnest Janet was, and so he persuaded Jean, his fiancée, to go with him. They went along together to the Rally, almost quarrelling all the way, each asking the other one why they were going.

"I don't want to go," said Barry.

"Well, neither do I," said Jean.

"What are we going for?" said Barry.

"I don't know," said Jean.

"You suggested it," said Barry.

"No, I didn't," said Jean, "It was your idea."

So they went on, all the way to the Royal Albert Hall. They found the right queue. It was a long one and they both became very hopeful that they would never be able to get in, but at that moment for no apparent reason a complete stranger came along and singled out those two from the whole queue and said, "Look, I've got two tickets here. Would you like them?" Well, of course they were in the queue and so there was no refusing. They went in to the Rally together.

Meanwhile down in Dorset Janet was thinking, wondering, and above all praying for Barry and Jean. She wondered whether they would go, and yet she had a deep conviction that they had gone, and at six o'clock, when she knew they would be queuing, she was walking along the beach of Studland Bay in earnest prayer for them. It came on to rain, so Janet went into a little church and knelt in prayer for some time. Then she opened her eyes and brilliant sunshine was streaming through the church window, and was lighting up some words in the stained glass, and this is what she read: "Jesus said unto her, thy brother shall rise again." And Janet knew that was a message from the Lord to her and she knew that Barry was at the Rally and that Barry was going to be converted.

And Barry was at the Rally, and Barry was listening intently, feeling very cynical, but as the meeting proceeded his cynicism left him and every word that was said went home like an arrow to his heart. At the end of the meeting Tom asked all those who had accepted Christ that night to rise to their feet as the congregation sang the chorus of the hymn "Jesus, I will trust Thee". He didn't ask those who wanted to accept

Christ, but only those who had accepted Him during the meeting to rise as an outward sign and, as that chorus sounded, without any collusion, both Barry and Jean rose to their feet at the identical moment, and each was filled with surprise and joy to see that the other had risen.

This was all something new to Janet's mother. For a while she stood apart from the three of them, who were now all praying earnestly for her. She could see things were different and she too longed for the experience they had, and all by herself, one evening, she went to the local Gospel Hall, where she heard about the Lord Jesus and simply received Him as her personal Saviour. Jean and Barry are now married and have a family of two small boys, Paul and Andrew, and recently they attended one of our Family Conferences. It is a great thrill when people receive Christ as Saviour, but an even greater thrill when a Christian home is formed and one sees people going on. Janet's work done to the glory of God is a tremendous help and inspiration to us here at Frinton.

3 Testing Time

IT WAS very wonderful how the Lord undertook all those years for the Rallies at the Royal Albert Hall. Tom had a conviction immediately after he was converted that one day he would preach in the Royal Albert Hall, and I suppose he must have preached there more often than any one man and certainly conducted more Rallies there. In 1955 he held his fiftieth Royal Albert Hall Rally.

On almost every occasion that great auditorium has been packed from floor to ceiling, a very inspiring sight in that particular building which has a special place in the hearts of the British people. Although most of our supporters imagined that these Rallies would go on every winter for time immemorial, we never felt like that, and each winter we sought guidance for the following year, as to whether it was the Lord's will to hold yet another series; and for the last two years the door has been closed. The policy of the management has changed, and they will no longer allow any organisation to have a series of Saturdays. The hall can be booked every day for a week or a fortnight, but not on Saturdays as formerly. This is the guidance we have needed, and for the past two years Tom has altered his programme radically. It was very wonderful, however, that we were able in 1955 to complete our Jubilee of Rallies, when we had one of the biggest crowds we have ever seen and an overwhelming number of people committed their lives to Christ. We were quite unable to cope with those who needed help, and this was a tremendous encouragement and seal upon those fifty Rallies that had been held there.

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It was a very wonderful thing, the way in which the solid work done in the Albert Hall prepared the way for the vast campaigns of Harringay and Wembley. In 1945, when Tom first organised Rallies in the Central Hall, Westminster, and in the Royal Albert Hall, it was very difficult indeed to get the co-operation of ministers. Most of them had no confidence

whatever in mass evangelism. There had been big campaigns, they said; masses of names had been given to them, and the converts had not stood, so they didn't believe in mass campaigns. But over the ten years of the Royal Albert Hall Rallies their confidence had been regained, and it was most encouraging to us toward the end of that time to receive letters from people who had completely changed their views.

One Minister wrote saying:

"I don't agree with your methods. I don't altogether agree with your message, but I have superb young people in my Church all of whom were converted at your Rallies, so I am coming along to see what it's all about."

Many did this, and the stories and the rumours they had heard of mass emotion and evangelistic frivolity were proved to be untrue. It is an interesting fact that the greatest critics of evangelistic meetings are often those who never attend them!

It was in 1952 at a meeting of Evangelical Leaders held in London that the suggestion was made of inviting Billy Graham to come to London. Tom told the people there that he knew Billy personally and had heard him preach, and that although it would mean his cancelling his winter programme the following year, he would gladly do so if Billy Graham were invited. Tom also promised to throw all his resources into such a crusade. And so it was that in 1954, for the first winter for some years, we held no series of Rallies. It seems strange to look back now, but all through that previous summer our young people were most upset about this. What! no Albert Hall Rallies next winter! And at each Conference Tom spent a considerable time telling them about Billy, and urging them to throw all they had into the campaign, to become counsellors, stewards, or to join the choir. "Cliff Barrows is the best choir leader in the world," he told them. It was wonderful how our helpers, at first reluctantly but then enthusiastically, supported the Harringay Crusade.

Tom was able to plan a tour in the West Country and visit a number of places for Rallies and weekends that had not been possible while the Albert Hall series were on, and he had a wonderful winter. Financially it was not an easy winter, nor of course for other Evangelical Organisations. We had all our staff who normally worked on the big series of meetings, and although Tom went on an evangelistic tour, there was nothing of this sort that our helpers could do, except, of course, to help

with the Harringay meetings, which they willingly did. But finance was a very big problem. Many Christian people diverted their normal giving from Missionary Societies and Evangelical work such as Hildenborough to the big effort, which, although quite understandable, made things very difficult for us, but through this after several years of abounding we learned how to be abased. Philippians IV, 12.

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How subtle is the Devil in his tactics, and how careful we must be, to be on the watch for his unexpected attack. I can never forget our complete astonishment when, having done all we could at, I may say, considerable sacrifice to smooth the way for the coming of Billy Graham, urging all our helpers to support the meetings by praying, working and giving, we found that certain malicious people were spreading rumours to the effect that Tom was doing all he could to oppose Billy Graham in his work! Fresh stories seemed to come out all the time. As soon as Billy was coming they said Tom had taken care to be out of London, which of course was completely true. Tom, in company with many other British Evangelists, was quietly getting on with the job elsewhere. Tom attended the Harringay meetings on every occasion, even when he was home for only one day. We had the joy of taking Ruth and Billy out to dinner and having great fellowship with them personally over the work, and rejoicing with them in its evident success.

Of course our own supporters did not believe the false rumours, for they had heard Tom on so many occasions urging them to support the Harringay meetings. How true is the French proverb "Evil be to him who evil thinks". There is one thing I have always so admired about Tom, and that is his lack of jealousy over other people's success. He always rejoices in the work of other Evangelists, admiring those who are older, and seeking to help those who are younger, just as older Evangelists in their turn have helped him.

It was a very testing time, and when mud is thrown, mud sticks, and although the rain of time has washed away most of the mud it was very hurtful at the time, but Tom himself seemed to be quite unmoved by it. When I was troubled he would say: "None of that can hurt me. I can only hurt myself if I allow myself to become bitter or small-minded." And the text he always quoted to me when I was worried was the one the Lord had given him specially: "What is that to thee,

follow thou Me." The great saints down the ages have suffered through the evil tongues of others, and I think it is wonderful to see, as I can see, how through it all Tom has matured spiritually, has grown to know the Lord better, and has a greater love for the Word of God and a greater capacity for prayer than ever before, and also I think I can say a greater sense of the Lord's approval and joy of being in the centre of His will.

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I have been taken to task many times by leading Christian men because I have said that one of my main responsibilities is to prevent Tom, as an Evangelist, from back-sliding and becoming a Bible Teacher! I think there is always a danger with an Evangelist that he settles down and becomes more interested in the Bible than he is in souls.

A Bible Teacher as such should be more interested in the Bible than in souls, because it is his very interest in the Bible that attracts and stimulates young people to study the Bible, but to the Evangelist the soul is of primary importance, and the need to bring the soul in touch with the Saviour is of major importance. On the other hand, with his love for souls, there is no one like the Evangelist who can teach the Bible, so clearly and simply because his concern all the time is not only to teach the Bible for its own sake, but to see that the young Christian is receiving the food he needs.

Of recent years I think Tom has taken to studying the Bible more than ever, not only with a view to giving it out, in addresses, but studying the Bible for the sake of the Bible itself. For instance, a year or so ago he commenced a special study of Romans. I remember during the first three months of the year that he read the book of Romans through each week in five different versions. Then he proceeded to read all the commentaries that he could get hold of on this particular book, and then he learnt the book of Romans off by heart. This is a very formidable task, as some of the phrases are very, very involved. It is easy enough to learn the eighth chapter, but some of those other chapters are by no means easy.

Since his conversion Tom has always found great help in committing Scripture to memory. Knowing it by heart, he says, you can meditate on it and really learn what is in the chapter. I think there is very little of the New Testament that he does not know "without book", as the martyr Ridley called

it, and he has the gift of being able to quote it correctly. During this last winter, when Tom has quoted his Bible Rally chapters rather than reading them, it has certainly made them live to me in quite a new way.

Tom maintains that if anyone can spare just ten minutes a day for Bible Study the very best way to use that is in committing to memory chapters, and books, of the Bible. The fact of learning makes us meditate and see great truths quite hidden before. So many people became really interested in this that Tom wrote a booklet entitled "Learning the Bible by Heart", and this has started hundreds of people storing up the treasures of the Bible in their minds.

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One must always be sensitive to what the Lord is doing at the time and to what His leading is. Sometimes it is the Lord's will for us to tackle some big pioneering job, but other times the command is to do something smaller, less spectacular perhaps, but just as useful, and so, since the big campaigns of Harringay and Wembley, when it has been impossible for us to hire the Royal Albert Hall, it has seemed that it is the Lord's will that Tom should undertake a teaching evangelism for a time.

In his evangelistic experience Tom has found the greatest impact has been made on any mission when people have been able to come night after night, but nowadays, owing to modern conditions, it seems impossible that in a longer campaign people can come more than one night a week, even those who have the greatest possible desire to be there. So in a ten-day campaign you may have people once or even twice, and although you may be building up a series, yet people are not getting the impact.

So it was that last year Tom decided that, rather than conducting several ten-day or two-week campaigns, he would have six simultaneous campaigns lasting for ten weeks, and speak one day a week at a number of different places, which included London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Falkirk, Carlisle and Bedford. This idea proved wonderfully successful. It was not in any sense meant to be the accepted evangelistic campaign. It was evangelistic and there were a great many conversions in some of the centres, but the idea was that the same crowd of people should come each week and be built up and encouraged.

From the letters we received it was grand to know that so

many of them had got a hunger and thirst for the Bible and a desire to read and study it for themselves. They had learnt a great deal of the workings of the Holy Spirit as set forth in the Acts, and they had been established in the faith.

It seems that Tom is to do another winter of his six simultaneous missions, and then he has some great ideas brewing—one idea particularly which has been growing in his heart and mind for many years, and one which we are now praying over.

These three years of consolidating ministry may well be not only a follow-up of big efforts, but a preparation for further enterprise.

4 The Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust

WHEN we opened Hildenborough Hall, Kent, in 1945 it was a personal venture of faith. We had no committee or guarantors, but Tom and I personally put all we had into the venture, in the way of capital and furniture and possessions, and we were able to obtain a mortgage on the house, and several other Christian friends who had confidence in us lent us the money to carry on. When telling his father about our plans for a Conference Centre, Tom was tremendously encouraged when his father offered to lend us a very considerable sum with no security. Without this help it is doubtful if we could have launched the work.

Now, there are some Christian people who have the happy knack of feeling that "the Lord will provide"; they can borrow money and if unable to meet their obligations are able to say "Too bad, the Lord has not provided, therefore I cannot pay you back"; but Tom inherits from both his father and grandfather what I can only describe as tremendous business integrity, and although he feels that the Lord will provide, he also realises that this will only happen if he is "not slothful in business" and serves the Lord with diligence, doing all that his "hand finds to do to the glory of God".

The evangelistic work which was done in London and all over the country was supported by donations and gifts, but the Conference Centre was privately owned and thus could be dubbed with that much suspect phrase of modern times "private enterprise", and the fact that it made no profit did not make it a recognised non-profit-making organisation. There were those who said that Hildenborough Hall was a racket and was run to provide us with thousands of pounds with which to line our pockets. This of course was not said by thinking people, but as our whole motive in running the Conference Centre was that young people should come to know the Saviour, and be built up, we felt that anything that could hinder the work or cast even a slur on its reputation was better avoided.

So we considered the question of amalgamating the two sides of the work, the evangelistic and the Conference Centre, and forming some kind of a Trust to be registered as a charity and non-profit-making organisation, and where we could be independent of any suggestion of gain on our part. This, too, would greatly help the day-to-day organising, as it had been increasingly difficult to separate one part of the work from the other, so difficult to tell where the evangelistic work began and where the Conference work ended. The two were so entirely one that the sensible thing seemed to be to form just such a Trust. The Bishop of Barking kindly became our President and his help, counsel and moral support have meant a very great deal to us since the formation of the Hildenborough Trust in 1953. Our Vice-Presidents are the Rev. Geoffrey King, Minister of West Croydon Tabernacle, the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster, Superintendent of Methodist Home Missions, and Lt.-General Sir William Dobbie.

To be more closely connected with us on the business side of the work we invited three men to form with us a Business Executive, to be responsible for the financial direction of the work, and to be able from time to time to give us the benefit of their experience and guidance in all matters pertaining to the business side of the work. But these men were chosen not only for their business ability and connections, but more especially as men whom we knew were already vitally connected with the spiritual side of the work. We felt it would not be a good thing if the business side of the work was directed by those who only had the business side in mind. But in inviting Mr. Cyril Wiggins to help us we knew that here we had not only the director of a well-known building concern, but someone who had attended many Conferences, had brought many parties to the Royal Albert Hall, and was able to appreciate the work from that side of things and would be prayerfully behind us. In inviting Mr. Robert Johnson to help we had not only his valuable experience as Co-ordinator of Developments for the Metal Box Company and Director of Canning at the Ministry of Food, but he had attended possibly more Conferences than any other one guest, and knew the spiritual value of the Conferences as well as the necessary business requirements. Mr. David Rennie, a younger man, had helped a great deal with the work on the Conferences, at the Royal Albert Hall in the choir, and in many other ways, and as an electrical engineer

with a firm of consulting engineers in London he was able to bring another side of experience to help in guiding the business of the Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust. More recently we invited Mr. David Hanton, a solicitor, to join us, and he is able to keep us on the right side of the law, although not at the expense of grace!

Tom was appointed the Chairman and General Director of the Trust and is entirely responsible for the day-to-day administration of both the Conference Centre and the Evangelistic work. Miss Elizabeth Smith was the obvious choice as Company Secretary, and Miss Frances Hay acts as Assistant Secretary. As a member of the Business Executive I can assure you that the business is conducted with the utmost efficiency and vision.

Hildenborough Hall was registered as a non-profit-making company, registered for charitable purposes only, and this amalgamated all the evangelistic work done in Rallies and Squashes, at individual meetings and in the work of the Conference Centre. Now, a great many people feel that they have a share in the work. We sent out a circular asking people to lend money, with or without interest, or to make outright gifts, and the result is that many people sent sums on loan from ten pounds upwards, and others sent gifts, so that in a very short time we had all the capital that was needed and the Hildenborough Trust was on a firm financial foundation.

Those of us who serve on the Business Executive give our services entirely voluntarily, and neither Tom nor I receive a salary. In this way we seek to be beyond the criticism of those who have seen the Conference Centre as a little gold mine laid by for our old age!

On the day the Trust was officially founded Tom called all the staff together to tell them of its inauguration and to ask for the Lord's blessing. He was about to return to his study after this meeting when a telephone call came through from a Christian friend whom he had only recently met. This new friend told him that he had just had his eightieth birthday and wished to give a thankoffering to the Lord, and in praying the matter over our work had been impressed upon his mind. Would Tom accept a gift of some three thousand pounds for the newly formed Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust? It seemed to Tom, coming as it did the moment after the first prayer and dedication of the Trust, like a definite seal on the step we had taken.

Robert I. Johnson, O.B.E., B.Sc. *(Vice-Chairman)*

Tom B. Rees *(Chairman and General Director)*

Cyril C. Wiggins

David G. Hanton, M.A., A.I.Arb.

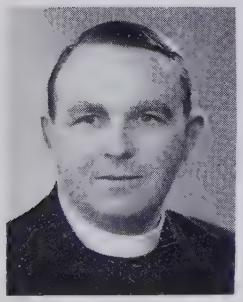
Elizabeth M. Smith *(Secretary)*

Jean A. Rees

Frances Hay *(Manageress of Hildenborough Hall)*

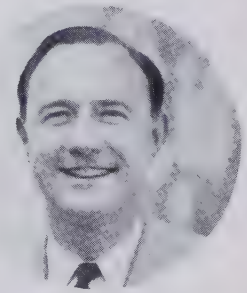
David C. Rennie, A.M.I.E.E.

Business Executive



Rev. Dick Rees

Rev. Stephen Olford



Rev. Godfrey Robinson

Ian Cory

Joyce Silcox

Rev. Alan Redpath

Conference for British Evangelists, *December* 1955

This has been only a beginning of the generosity shown to us by the saints of God.

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As well as the help of Presidents and members of the Business Executive we have another wonderful team of helpers of which I must make mention, known as the Partners of Hildenborough. We formed the Partners in 1953. We realised that many people all over the world pray for our work at Hildenborough and in the Evangelistic field, but we felt the need of more concentrated help for the work at Hildenborough itself, and for a number of people who would become partners with us in prayer and work. The text from which we chose the name is Luke 5, verse 7, "They beckoned unto their *partners*, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them." We now have over five hundred partners to whom we can "beckon" in times of need.

We decided not to make it too easy for anyone to become a partner, so we invited only those who would undertake to pray regularly for the work not only of the Conference Centre but also of the Rallies, not just the occasional prayer but to covenant to pray regularly. Also we reckoned that those we wanted as Partners would be those who, in a systematic and regular way, would put aside at least a tenth of their income for the Lord, and would ask the Lord how the tenth was to be disposed of, and we suggested that they should set aside a regular part of that tithe for the Evangelistic work. And it is thrilling the way these Partners give, ranging from ten shillings per annum up to some who give a fifty-pound covenant. This regular, systematic giving, I am sure, is especially blessed of the Lord and is vastly superior to the spasmodic giving that is done, based merely upon the emotions of the moment.

I can best explain what partnership involves by quoting five points we make in our partnership leaflet.

"The Partners of Hildenborough are a team of Christian people who have covenanted to help the general Evangelistic and Conference work of Hildenborough Hall in the following specific ways.

1. By praying intelligently each day for the work: To stimulate prayer, in addition to the Bulletin, Partners will receive more personal letters with reports and confidential information concerning the problems of the work.

2. By making the Rallies and Conferences widely known and being willing to undertake practical work when occasion arises.

3. By assuming personal responsibility for the success of the work: This involves making concrete suggestions and constructive criticisms of the work, and being available from time to time for consultation.

4. By attending special Conferences, either at Hildenborough Hall or in London, when the Conference and Evangelistic work will be discussed fully in a frank, confidential, prayerful manner.

5. By giving sacrificially and regularly to the work."

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Partners agree to try to bring parties of young people to Hildenborough, and since we have formed the Partners there has been a tremendous increase in the number of those who come with parties, ranging from six to thirty or even more. Mr. and Mrs. Stordy of Wolverhampton have brought no less than 140 young people to conferences in this one year! This really is a record. Partners not only give money and prayer, but they give of their talents. For instance, Mr. Austin Harris, an athlete of no small fame, once an Olympic competitor and now an instructor in physical training, spends many of his summer holidays with us organising the sports and the games. He has donated a great deal of sports equipment and brings down fresh ideas and suggestions for beach games and sports. Then Nigel Cooke, another of our Partners, comes down from time to time and helps in all kinds of ways with the electrical side of the work, fitting up loud speakers and giving us a great deal of time and saving us a great deal of money. Then again Miss Claudia Miller, who was once on the staff, comes and spends much of her summer vacations helping us as an Assistant Hostess. Many other Partners are able to help us in such things as obtaining wholesale equipment. One Partner recently donated the paint for redecorating the outside of the house. We feel that with these five hundred helpers we are by no means alone.

Tony Hinds, who was once on the staff as Publications Secretary and distinguished himself by marrying our chief cook Ruth (née Butt), is gifted with his pen and can always be relied upon to produce articles and reports for the Bulletin, but it was he who composed a number of the "poems" we use in promoting the Conferences, such as:

Edward's brain is in a whirl:
He has two boys and a girl,
Plus a very charming wife;

Yet he's puzzled all his life
Where to take his brood away
For a summer holiday.
Just imagine his delight
When he found out that he might
Go to Hildenborough Hall,
Book a room and take them all;
"No age limit," what a boon!
Families all the month of June!

And

If you want to hear a din
Just suggest to Patrick Flynn
That he spend his holiday
Fishing in the Firth of Tay.
He prefers althletic fun,
Bracing air and lots of sun:
Early morning cup of tea,
And also youthful company.
He'll rejoice to be alive
If he forks out five pounds five
For a week (or two, maybe)
At Hildenborough by the Sea.

But the greatest way in which the Partners help is by prayer. As *they* wait upon the Lord for us, so He renews *our* strength. Each week it is essential that those of us who work at the Conference Centre should be spiritually on our toes, ready in the day of the Lord's power, and that each week should be no ordinary week but one in which spiritual history is made in the lives of those who are present. We cannot afford ourselves to be off form spiritually, and yet the physical, mental and spiritual strain is such that as the weeks go by virtue goes out of us which can only be replaced as people pray and as we ourselves keep in touch with the Lord. We are increasingly conscious that the Lord's people are in prayer for us, and this is the main reason why many of the guests say, "I felt the presence of the Lord as soon as I stepped in at the front door."

5 Turning to the East

IT IS strange how you will find a thing when you are not looking for it. We had quite decided that there was no seaside place in southern England suitable for a Conference Centre, and thought we had better resign ourselves to staying in Kent, even if numbers were smaller, and to concentrate on the spiritual side of the work. Then in September 1953 Tom and I went away to Cromer for a few days' break in the middle of a week. I always like the east coast; the air (so I am told) is like champagne, and as I was born on the north-east coast it always suits me. When, after a few delightful days in Norfolk, we decided to break the journey on our way home, we looked at the map and Tom said, "Why not let's stay the night at Frinton? Everyone says what a wonderful place it is. It might be a good place to go for a holiday sometimes, if we can find a suitable place to stay."

So it was that apparently quite by chance we drove over the level crossing, which we now call Frinton's "front door", and down Connaught Avenue. As we turned into the Esplanade and saw the Greensward and the sea, we realised that the half had not been told. We couldn't say "Why did no one ever tell us?" because they had told us. What we did say was, "Why did we never believe them?"

We booked a room at an hotel and then walked along the Greensward exclaiming ecstatically on all that we saw. And then we wondered if our eyes deceived us, for right in the very best position in the middle of the front was an enormous hotel, empty, with a board outside saying "For Sale or To Let Furnished as a going concern". Then I made a great mistake: I spoke first.

"What a wonderful place to have as a 'Hildenborough Hall' to run as a Conference Centre," I said.

Now, you who are wives will understand it when I say that I made a mistake. I should have let Tom say it first. He immediately turned cautious and said, "Oh, I don't know. It might not be very suitable."

But all the same I noticed that he took the telephone number of the agents and lost no time in ringing them, as soon as we got back to our hotel. A member of the local Council showed us all over, and told us the history of the Hotel Esplanade, as it was then called. It had been the best hotel of Frinton in the old days, where celebrities like the Kaiser and Bernard Shaw and the Duchess of Windsor and many other people had stayed, from the early part of the century onwards. But for the last two years it had been empty. The Italian proprietor who had been running it was a very successful hotelier, but he had died and his wife carried on, and it had not been a success. Since then no one had come forward to take it over.

"You see, the difficulty is," the Councillor explained to us, feeling that he must lay all his cards on the table in an act of great honesty, "there aren't really many of the usual attractions in Frinton. There is no cinema, for instance. There are no buses in the town, there is no pier, and Frinton is very strict about the rules and regulations and bye-laws about how people behave themselves—no picnicking on the Greensward, no undressing on the beach."

I think he may have felt he was losing a sale for the hotel, but every word he said warmed the cockles of our hearts. Now, we knew that the Council of Frinton and the local inhabitants were very conservative about whom they allowed to come into their lovely little town, and we imagined that when this Councillor knew that we were not regular hotel owners, but a Conference Centre, it might be the end of our hopes. But honesty is the best policy, and when we were asked the inevitable question, "Were we thinking of opening an hotel?", with our hearts in our mouths we told him that we came from Hildenborough Hall in Kent and that we should want to use the Esplanade Hotel as a Conference Centre. We expected that he would immediately look coldly at us and say, "Oh, well, that's not the kind of thing we want here", but such was not the case.

"Hildenborough Hall, Kent?" he said. "My daughter has told me all about that place. Wait till I tell her you are thinking of coming here—she will be excited."

We returned home to Kent and were very soon absorbed in the exacting day-to-day programme of the Conferences and we put the idea of moving to Frinton into cold storage. We had only just formed the Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust and the

decision rested not only with ourselves but with our colleagues, so Tom went off on his annual trip to America and nothing more was done until January.

Then on a cold January morning Tom woke up with a strong conviction. He announced to Miss Hay and me, "We are going to have the day off on Wednesday. We are going to the seaside." We were not a little mystified, feeling it was not altogether the weather or the time of the year for paddling or bathing. He rang up his friend and colleague Oliver Styles and told him the same thing, and then he broke the news to us that we were going to Frinton to have another look at the Esplanade Hotel with a view to moving there.

To make a long story short, we came, we saw and we were conquered, and the next thing was to take the members of the Business Executive with us to view the land. They told us afterwards that they went in a very cautious frame of mind, determined to agree to nothing rash. But having seen the place, they arrived at the same conclusion that we did ourselves. And what I admired about them was their ability to make an immediate decision. Some people sound very pious and say, "I think we should go away and pray about it for some time", and although this is sometimes the result of spirituality, it is very often a way to avoid having to make a decision and is not spirituality at all but lazy-mindedness. However, we had a meeting then and there, and it was agreed that plans should be put in motion at once.

First we had to dispose of Hildenborough Hall in Kent and then obtain the lease not only for the Hotel Esplanade but for the house next door, known as The Willows, to run it as an annexe. It was easy to decide this at a meeting, but it was quite a formidable task to accomplish. And as Tom said to me, "If it's not the Lord's will for us to go to Frinton, it will be very easy for Him to stop us, and our guidance will be very easy to get circumstantially." For to dispose of a property like Hildenborough Hall, with thirty-two acres, and to dispose of it quickly, was something which required almost a miracle. And to obtain not only the lease of the Hotel Esplanade on favourable terms, but also that of the house next door, which was quite separately owned, was a set of circumstances which, if they all dovetailed, would go to prove that the Lord's seal was upon the enterprise. So plans were set in motion.

Tom went first of all to the Kent County Council and offered

them the estate in Kent. "Did they want it for their education department?" he asked. "Did they want it for their health department as an institution, or a hospital, a convalescent home, or for old people?" The Kent County Council considered it and decided that they had no use at all for the property.

Then other plans were set in motion. Tom had another idea. There was a convalescent home near Tonbridge that was seeking new premises. Tom called in to see the Superintendent and offered him the property. He came to see it and found it exactly what he was wanting. And to our great joy he agreed to purchase the property for twenty thousand pounds, and he agreed to take over all the fixtures and fittings at valuation, and the whole thing seemed too good to be true.

It was! We had forgotten the Charity Commissioners, and discovered that it was necessary before making a sale to advertise the fact for a fortnight to see if we could obtain a higher bid. The Business Executive were perfectly satisfied with the price. The Hildenborough Evangelistic Trust had purchased the freehold from us at fifteen thousand pounds, and the twenty thousand pounds would give the Trust a profit of five thousand pounds. But the advertisement had to go in the paper nevertheless. At this point the Kent County Council pricked up their ears. If this property was so acceptable to the convalescent home, had they been missing something? So they stepped in and said they would like to buy it, and they offered a little higher bid than the doctor. The doctor then raised his bid, and then the Kent County Council went all bureaucratic on us. I think they forgot that we were not a totalitarian State and that there was no war on, and they said, "If you don't let us have this property we will buy it under compulsory powers."

And so the convalescent home had to stand to one side, in spite of having all their plans made, and the Kent County Council sailed in. Regardless of the fact that the doctor would have taken over all the fixtures and fittings, they ignored all that and said, "Oh, no, we don't want everything, only certain things." They wanted to turn the place into an old people's home and they would show us, they said, that they didn't waste public money. So they did a number of rather extraordinary things. They looked over the place and decided what they would purchase. They saw a little cabin in the grounds which was furnished as a little two-roomed cottage: they agreed

to take all the fitted carpet that was laid down and all the curtains, and then they decided they would not have the cabin itself—that could be dismantled and taken away! I often wonder now if some official is puzzling his mind as to where that carpet of peculiar shape can have come from, and what on earth to do with it.

However, disappointing though this was, meaning a loss of about five thousand pounds to the Trust on the fixtures and fittings, it was better than we had hoped, and it only remained for us to get a lease for the Esplanade Hotel and for the house which is now Hildenborough Lodge, and to arrange to move the following September. To do this necessitated Tom visiting various parts of the country, going to Edinburgh to see the owners of the Esplanade Hotel, going down to the West Country to interview the owners of Hildenborough Lodge, and in a surprisingly short time, involving much "blood, sweat, toil and tears", the various transactions were completed, and we took possession of the Esplanade Hotel in May 1954.

But there was a great deal of work to be done there before it was ready for occupation, and during those summer months four intrepid workers spent many hard weeks of cleaning, planning, taking inventories, and getting the house into the right state for our first Conference. Ruth Nuttall, who had formerly been with us as a housekeeper, joined us as an Assistant Manageress, making her first task the renovation of the Esplanade Hotel and its transformation from a first-class hotel into a Conference Centre. Her great gifts of organisation and planning were put to the test and a wonderful job she did with the assistance of Evelyn Watson. Nigel Cooke worked indefatigably supervising workers carrying out plumbing and electrical alterations. Alec Duffus got to work with a will, painting and decorating. Each week Tom and I went up with Miss Hay and spent a day and a half inspecting progress and viewing the promised land. The Esplanade Hotel was beautifully furnished throughout, and the furniture from Kent would fit into the Lodge, and also into another house which it was necessary for us to rent for extra accommodation and where Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Styles would make their home. We were also able to rent a garage, together with accommodation for a games room, and a large furniture store.

As everything seemed to dovetail and fit in, we were more and more conscious of the fact that the hand of the Lord was

with us, and that it was His will for us to move to Frinton. But from time to time there was severe testing of our faith. It came right up to September, when fifteen Pickfords' vans had been ordered to move the furniture, and the first Conference in Frinton was to open on September 11th, that we got a casual message from the Kent County Council:

"We've never looked at the roof," they told us. "Of course, if there is anything wrong with the roof the whole sale's off."

"But," we said, "you've contracted to purchase."

"Oh no, we haven't contracted—there was no contract. There is no contract with compulsory purchase."

"But you haven't got a compulsory purchase; you've only threatened to have one," we told them.

"Yes, but it's the same thing," they said.

They had us both ways in a cleft stick. They had neither made a contract to purchase, nor had they exercised their powers of compulsory purchase. But if they found anything wrong with the roof, they told us, the whole thing was off. And by this time the convalescent home had found alternative accommodation. My faith was temporarily stunned. They were coming to examine the roof the next day and I went about in a daze. I could visualise the whole thing. We had taken the place in Frinton—it had been necessary to do so—and suddenly if the Kent County Council threw back the property on our hands, it might take us a couple of years to sell, and a house that is empty, denuded of its furniture, is by no means so easy to dispose of as one in the state of perfection that Hildenborough Hall was in at the time we moved. Now I know my faith shouldn't have faltered, but it had been a very tiring few months. I should have realised that the Lord had the whole thing in hand, but it was just a little much at that point on top of everything else. However, I needn't have worried. The inspectors came down from the roof and pronounced it completely sound, so the sale could proceed.

6 Fifteen Pickford's Pantechnicons

THE amount of organisation in planning the move was enough to make one's brain reel. There were four destinations in Frinton for all the furniture. It was to go to the Main Hall or the annexe, Hildenborough Lodge, a certain amount was to go to the other house, Frant, and a great deal to the Garage Store. So every stick and stone was labelled with a distinctive coloured label. This was done during a Teenagers' Conference, the last of its kind in Kent, and I must say the idea occurred to me that if a practical joker changed the labels the results didn't bear thinking of. Maybe the teenagers had read the practical jokers' text, "It is a sport to a fool to do mischief", so they refrained.

When people heard that we were planning to finish our last Conference at Hildenborough Hall in Kent after breakfast on Saturday morning and start our first Conference at Hildenborough Hall in Frinton on the very same day at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they thought we were quite mad. They were probably right. They asked us how we were going to get the furniture all the way from Kent set up in time to start in the afternoon. But, of course, the secret of the operation was this, that Hildenborough Hall at Frinton was already furnished, and we did not plan to open Hildenborough Lodge until the following season. Therefore we had our final meeting at Hildenborough in Kent on Friday night, September 10th, when our speaker was the Rev. Gordon Thomas, who is now with the Lord. Tom and I attended the closing meeting there.

We sang as a final hymn,

> How good is the God we adore,
> Our faithful unchangeable Friend!
> His love is as great as His Pow'r,
> And knows neither measure nor end!
>
> 'Tis Jesus the First and the Last,
> Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
> We'll praise Him for all that is past,
> And trust Him for all that's to come.

and with real joy in remembering, we thanked the Lord "for all that was past".

Incidentally, the very first hymn we sang at our first Conference session at Frinton was the same one, only this time our emphasis was not only "we thank Him for all that is past", but "we trust Him for all that's to come".

After the last prayer we said goodbye, we got into the car and arrived at Frinton at twelve o'clock at night, where tremendous preparations were being made and half the staff had already arrived. By three o'clock the following afternoon everything was ready to receive the guests for the first Conference at Hildenborough Hall, Frinton. We were encouraged by the numbers of messages and telegrams received, a number of people sending us that text from Haggai which I quoted in Chapter One, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place will I give peace."

We had a wonderful opening Dedication Service. All the guests were thrilled with the place. They were as delighted with Frinton as we were. After that very bad summer of 1954 the sun shone brightly throughout the whole of that first week, as indeed it did that year until the end of the season.

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When we decided to move it was a great joy to us when practically the entire staff agreed to come with us. We were not, of course, able to take the resident gardeners, but as I look over the more recent staff photograph it is wonderful to see how many of those people who are helping us now have been with us, if not right from the very beginning, then for a very long time.

Rebecca Mitchell, our head waitress, arrived with Miss Frances Hay on our very first day in November 1945, and there is no guest who has been to Hildenborough Hall that does not know Rebecca, from the small children at the family conferences to the much older people who have stayed with us. Rebecca has the same liking for a high standard of cleanliness and efficiency as Miss Hay, and like Miss Hay she has an Irish sense of humour which is a great standby in running a Conference Centre!

Alec Duffus, our painter and decorator, was also one of the originals. He not only painted the whole of Hildenborough Hall in Kent a number of times, starting at the beginning and

working through the rooms, rather like painting the Forth Bridge, but he is doing the same now at Frinton and has just completed painting the outside of the house.

Hildenborough Lodge has much of the Hildenborough Hall, Kent, atmosphere, partly, I think, because so much of the Kent furniture was placed there and partly because it is the solid English country-house type of building. Here we have our Conference Hall, a comfortable lounge, writing room and a little room called the Oak Room which is used by guest speakers for consultations. This house has a delightful garden, not large but big enough to provide cutting flowers, which are still a feature of decoration. We have built a greenhouse and erected wrought-iron gates and removed some unsightly concrete tanktraps. And now after three seasons the two houses are beginning to have that "Tom Rees" appearance.

While I am describing our two main houses I must not forget the Games Room and Frant. The Games Room is an upper room over the garage where we have two full-sized table-tennis tables and skittles, billiards, and darts. The room is well patronised in spring and autumn, when the lure of the beach is not too strong.

Our third house at Frinton is called Frant, in Third Avenue. It is a large sunny house just off the sea front. Here Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Styles made their home when we first arrived, and during the very busy season about thirty guests are housed there. This is a tremendous improvement on the Kent Gatehouse accommodation, which were stables only thinly disguised.

Now, one thing we had been warned about in coming to Frinton was that we would find the local inhabitants very stand-offish and snobby. They would make things very difficult for us, we were told. We have lived here for three years and we have yet to meet these people. We could not have received greater kindness or co-operation from the local inhabitants. Naturally, of course, the shopkeepers were delighted to see us. We brought a lot of extra trade both summer and winter to them, but not only that. The local Tennis Club, whose courts are second only in quality to Wimbledon, gave us a delightful welcome, invited Tom and me to become honorary members and give our guests most generous terms. Nor was the Golf Club behind. Both for our Golfers' Conference and for the

day-to-day golfing green fees the Committee have been exceedingly generous and also co-operative and understanding. We have never been made, even from the very first day, to feel interlopers in this little town, but rather the reverse.

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People who have never been to Hildenborough get the strangest ideas about what sort of guests come to us. We hear the funniest rumours. I had a letter yesterday saying, "Is it true that you do not welcome working-class Christians, but that you only cater for the upper ten?" What an idea! We don't cater for any special type of person. We never stop to think, is a person upper, lower or middle ten? (Why ten anyway? We can take nearly two hundred.) Once they step over the front door I don't think anyone stops to think what anyone's occupation is, except as a matter of interesting conversation. It is true, numbers of people have said, "I heard this was a very stiff place and that I would never feel at home, but I felt at home from the first five minutes." I think I must get out some cartoons of Popular Misconceptions—"That everyone at Hildenborough wears evening dress". You may laugh, but I frequently get letters saying, "Is it true that we all wear evening dress at Hildenborough?" Nightdresses and pyjamas, yes—evening dress, no. We do of course ask guests not to come in to dinner at night in their tennis shorts or bathing trunks, though they can come to lunch how they like. We find that to wash and change out of sports clothes is a very good preparation for the evening session as well as being pleasanter for those who have to eat with the tennis champion or bathing enthusiast. One comfort is that any rumour or criticism about our being high-hat and stiff never comes from anyone who has been to a conference. All we can say to anyone who has heard such rumours is, "Come and see."

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Frinton is like a village and it is like a family: when you become a Frintonian you are "one of us" and we are all part of the big family. And soon we found ourselves taking an equal pride with those who had lived here for years, in the fact, for instance, that "it never rains all day at Frinton", taking almost a personal pride in the lovely little public gardens that are planted with such colourful floral decorations. "Friendly Frinton" certainly lived up to its title, and it has encouraged us in these last few years to hear all the kind things that have

been said about our guests by local inhabitants. I think they might well have felt apprehensive in wondering what on earth was coming to Frinton, but the shopkeepers have told us that you can recognise someone from Hildenborough, "they have something different about them". We could not but feel, just a year after our original visit to Frinton, that the Lord had undertaken in a wonderful way and everything had dovetailed in; everything had happened as we had hoped it would happen, confirming the fact that it was the right thing to come.

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Our financial troubles were not over yet. Tom went to America and I joined him that year. We had had a tremendous expense in moving. It had been necessary to renovate the kitchens, both at the Esplanade Hotel and at the Lodge, and the move itself involved us in no small expense. And so we wrote to the Kent County Council saying that their cheque for twenty thousand pounds for the house would come in very useful. But they weren't in any hurry, and calmly told us that as a matter of fact, the Ministry of Health had not given its O.K. to the taking over of Hildenborough Hall, and that if there were any difficulty there, once again the whole sale would come to nothing! And we had moved out on the understanding that they were taking it over.

Meanwhile we were temporarily embarrassed for money. Pickfords' bill came and the local contractors' bills were coming in, and we were still waiting for the Government Department to wake up and pay its debts. It is strange, isn't it, how the Government will send a really nasty note about your Income Tax—"This is the final demand", with great emphasis—yet they never mind how long they keep you waiting if they owe you money! Tom had a strenuous tour in the States and, after all the hard work of the summer, we were very thankful to have a fortnight's holiday when I went over to join him. But every day he kept waiting for a cable concerning the settlement of the account with the Kent County Council. It was not easy to relax knowing that the bills were piling up and wondering what the Ministry of Health was deciding. However, Tom kept quoting a little poem:

He who hath taught us
To trust in His name
Would not so far have brought us
To put us to shame.

And I read a little booklet three times, called "Quit worrying and start trusting", with very little success. I wrote a chapter in my recent book *Wedding Presents* all about "taking anxious thought and not worrying", and I thought at the time how very easy it is to give good advice to others about not worrying, and how difficult it is to take your own medicine.

We spent a great deal of that holiday in prayer: we generally do on holidays. I remember that Tom was preparing for his next year's series of evangelistic meetings, and each day he prayed and prepared until twelve o'clock in the morning and then he and I had an hour's prayer until lunch time. We did have a little time together in the afternoons, and then he got back at it again after tea.

When we finally arrived home, I think it was the day before Christmas Day, the Kent County Council very kindly sent us a Christmas present of part of the cheque on account, with the promise of the rest later. So our financial embarrassments were temporarily relieved, and we were able to eat our Christmas dinner with a freer mind than we might have done.

Incidentally, although the Convalescent Home who would have purchased Hildenborough Hall wanted to move in straight away, and would have kept the place in apple-pie order, the Kent County Council were in no particular hurry. Hildenborough Hall remained empty and desolate for many months, and the garden that we had so carefully cultivated slowly went back to wrack and ruin. No attempt seemed to be made to get it ready for the old people, and one day some thieves got in and robbed practically every bedroom of the lead from the handbasins, smashing the basins on the ground. The desolation must have been terrible.

Even as I am writing this, nearly three years later, on the Town and Country programme of the B.B.C. we heard only last night an announcement that a house, formerly known as Hildenborough Hall, was now opening as an Old People's Home with sixty-eight residents. I wonder if those old people will feel any sense of the amazing things that happened there. Will there be echoes of the hymns sung and the prayers prayed? Will they sense that the Conference Hall and Lounge have been the holy place of many a new birth and dedication?

7 Behind the Scenes

THIS book is not only written for those who know all about Hildenborough, but more especially for those to whom the whole idea is a complete mystery.

First of all, perhaps I had better tell you what our object is. We feel that in addition to the work done at Churches, there is a need for further teaching. Nowadays so many young people do not come from Christian homes; in the old days parents taught children line by line, and precept upon precept, and what they learned at Church Services was often a very small part compared with the spiritual training they received in their homes. Over ninety per cent. of our young people come from homes where the parents never go to church, where the parents have no spiritual interest whatsoever. We have to realise that these young people are the children of a group who were known as the "bright young things" immediately after the first World War, when there was a reaction against everything religious. There had been the war to end all wars. No more wars were coming, people could enjoy themselves, and why bother with religion? Religion hadn't prevented a war, it was played out. They themselves remembered the days when they had been made to go to church, and hadn't wanted to, so their young people have not been made to go to church, have not been given any religious teaching, and consequently have a tremendous hunger and thirst for it. In fact, there is a great swing back with their children to the old ways. As one young person said, "My parents are terribly old-fashioned, they don't go to church, and they don't even read the Bible."

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At Hildenborough Hall we do not advocate any particular blessing, or teach any particular form of holiness; we try to give them a grounding in the fundamentals of the faith, to give them an appetite for the Bible, to show them how to study it and to teach them to pray, to give them a certain amount of

training in Christian work, and to send them away better able to serve the Lord, better equipped as Sunday School teachers and Church members. Not only that, but to be better Christian citizens, to witness for the Lord in the place where He has put them. If they are nurses, to be better nurses; if they are office workers, to be more efficient in their work; if they work in factories, to do their work to the glory of God.

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It is a tremendous joy at Frinton to be able to have people of all ages at the Conferences. We still can't get the idea across to older people that they are allowed to come. So many, even now, say, "I would love to come to Frinton, but of course I'm over thirty-five." I wrote the following poem about this, which was published in many magazines in order to encourage older people to come to Frinton.

My Aunt Mary's very dumb:
When I asked her if she'd come
Down to Hildenborough Hall,
Said it wouldn't do at all,
She would have to tell the truth
And there they only welcomed youth.
(For ten years, this Aunt of mine
Has stayed a steady 39)
Don't believe it, Auntie dear,
They take ALL AGES through the year.
Auntie's face was all a-beam,
Seemed the answer to her dream,
"If you're sure that's really true,
Why not let's take Grandma, too?"

Many people have wondered whether having older people on the Conference would have a detrimental effect on the youngsters, upon the freedom of the young people's Conference, but we have found quite the reverse. Numbers of older people have expressed appreciation of the respectful way in which the younger people treat them and of the consideration they receive. The younger people themselves seem to enjoy having the older ones there and are able in conversation to get help from them in addition to what they receive from the speakers.

I think having people of all ages at the Conferences has added a great deal to the spiritual value of the Conferences and in many other ways. The Church of God is not limited to any

one age, or type of people, and it seems part of spiritual education for young people and older people to mingle together in learning the things of God.

I think you will be interested if I tell you something about my own job, as I am directly connected with every guest who comes to Hildenborough, and as Conference Secretary I can tell you a great deal about the inside workings, and what happens behind the scenes.

Almost a year before the Conference Season I have to start inviting the speakers for next year. We have a little committee meeting about this to decide who should be invited, any suggestions for new speakers, to get ideas for different types of Conferences, such as Conferences on Personal Evangelism, Christian Workers' Conferences, Sunday School Teachers', Homemakers' Conferences (more about these later perhaps, if time permits), but we start a year in advance planning the speakers and drawing up the prospectus for the following year.

This comes out about January, and from then on bookings start to come in. First of all we hear from Party Leaders, who write to us and ask us to hold so many places for them until they are able to get their party together.

Then the application forms come in.

Each morning Miss Hay and I open the post together, we look at the application forms, and we put people's names down in our book under the appropriate kind of accommodation. Many people wonder why we ask for so much information on the application form. They have an idea that this is given in order to see whether they are suitable for us to accept. This is not the case. It is to give us an idea, particularly for those who are sharing bedrooms, as to a congenial set of room mates for them. We like to know their approximate age so that we can put them with those of similar age.

Opening the post and scrutinising the application forms is a most interesting occupation, and you get a thrill when you see someone coming back who received definite help last year; not coming back alone this time, but writing to say, "I am bringing a friend with me from the office who I hope is getting interested in spiritual things." We often have a prayer there and then for that particular person. Someone else is bringing a party from her school. Planning accommodation is quite easy in January, but as the Conferences get fuller it requires a little more juggling about to try and fit everyone in. We have

to keep places for men, because, strange to say, men will not make up their minds about their holidays until the last minute, whereas girls plan their holidays early in the year and get it all booked up.

There are a great many processes which happen to that appli-tion form. First of all it is taken to the Addressograph Department, where a metal plate is made. A card is then stamped to go into our card index, and an envelope is stamped to send back the receipt and travelling instructions, and what is called a room card is stamped, so that we can plan which room that person is going to occupy.

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The week before the Conference arrives, Miss Hay and I spend an hour or so performing an operation which is known as "putting the Conference into beds". It sounds rather formidable, but is not as bad as it sounds. Before doing so we pray for guidance, and again and again people have said, "It was the person in my room that led me to Christ; you must have been guided in putting us together." It is quite an art deciding who will sleep with whom, and getting the numbers to fit in, getting the double and single rooms allotted.

It is such a joy at Frinton to have such delightful accommodation, and not to have to send the unfortunate men down to the Gatehouse as we did at the other Hildenborough. We have various kinds of accommodation. There are the best rooms with the private bathrooms, the double rooms and the single rooms, and there are the sharing rooms. The A sharing accommodation is all in the main house with interior sprung mattresses and other comforts, and then our B sharing accommodation is at Hildenborough Lodge, the house next door, where the rooms are very pleasant, but not, of course, with the extra luxury of interior sprung mattresses that we have in the main house. Our C sharing accommodation is at Frant, the house a few minutes' walk away from the main house, where we are able to keep the prices very low—in fact a great deal below cost. At certain times of the year we take people there for five guineas per week, whereas the basic cost is much higher than that, but there are those who are not able to come unless the price is kept right down, so we try to make this possible for some weeks of the year.

It is amazing what some young people will do to pay for their holiday. There was a time when teenagers expected their

parents to pay for everything, and if they were not able to afford it, then the teenager went without. Nowadays they are much more enterprising. They do all manner of things to earn the money. One girl went baby sitting and with other jobs earned £30; others take holiday jobs at busy times. One girl who was converted at a Conference was faced with a great problem. Her parents were violently antagonistic about Christianity, and flatly refused to pay her fees for a Conference, but one day her father was in a very expansive mood. He had won a prize in the football pools, and offered to pay for his daughter to come after all. A big decision for a new convert of sixteen, the Conference would help her spiritually, but she refused the offer politely and did a paper round, rising very early, and earned the money.

Each Friday a room list is typed telling where the guests are all going to sleep, and the next excitement is their arrival on Saturday afternoon. We have previously said goodbye to a Conference after breakfast on Saturday morning, and then of course the whole house has to be turned round, spring-cleaned, and made ready in apple-pie order for the new Conference.

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Now, you might think that after running Conferences for twelve years one could get into the routine, and feel rather blasé about the new Conference coming in, and get rather professional, but strange to say this doesn't happen, and each Saturday I await with pleasurable excitement the arrival of the new guests at four o'clock, and feel just as thrilled and interested to see them as if they were the very first Conference. As the week goes by, each day one gets to know them better, and excitement increases as Friday approaches, and then comes the joy of hearing of the help received. I think it is because of the spiritual impact that one never tires of the work. It is not like running an ordinary hotel, or an ordinary holiday camp, it is because each week there is a work done for Eternity, and each week something happens for the Lord, that His work never palls on us. We may get tired in it, but never tired of it.

Once all the guests have been welcomed and taken to their rooms, the next thing is to decide whereabouts they are going to sit for meals, and as they come to the dining room for their table places we try to fix people up with congenial table companions. In Kent, of course, where we had all young people, we just used to leave guests to scramble and find their own

places, but at Frinton we have people of all ages, and we find it better to plan table places for them, so that husbands and wives can sit together without the wholesale scramble, and so that families can be together; and we try to arrange a congenial party, and make suitable changes and adjustments throughout the week. People who are used to the old method often say, Couldn't we all move round as we used to? but those who try the new method by the end of the week agree it is better. The table get to know each other, can discuss the sessions sensibly together, whereas otherwise each fresh meal is like a Saturday night all over again; they have to start to get to know each other, and can't take up where they left off at the last meal. It takes quite a bit of ingenuity and planning to fit everyone in who wants to share a table together, but I always enjoy it, and find it another means of getting to know people.

We keep the Saturday night programme very informal. We have been having a variety of games in order that guests should get to know other people. Some game where they will talk to each other, bringing in a code word in return for which they get a bean, to make people mingle and get to know each other at the outset; or a game with clues to guests' names, so that they have to ask them their names, and find out about them. All these things help to break the ice and get the house party knowing each other as soon as possible.

On the first night members of the staff introduce themselves, saying who they are and where they come from, so that guests can get to know them too. Each week we have a number of assistant hosts who come and help to organise the games and the excursions.

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In Kent we had an assistant host who came and helped by driving the car, Dorcas, as our estate car was called. This young man was called Ian Cory, and I remember our chauffeur telling us how conscientious he was in driving the car. He once took out a party of older people, amongst whom was my mother, and she told me when she came back what a delightful time they had had, and how considerate and helpful Ian Cory had been. "Even," she said, "to old ladies like us!" This somehow or other lodged in my brain, and bore fruit later.

When we had been at Frinton nearly two years, Oliver Styles, Tom's friend and colleague as he always called him, was invited to take up work in the East End of London

at Stratford. He felt this was a call to him to other work, and although he still could help us with running certain Conferences and speaking, it meant that we had to find someone else in his place. When Tom told me about this I said,

"I know the sort of person we want, someone like Ian Cory who used to help us as an assistant host when we were in Kent."

Now Tom has a very poor memory for names, and he couldn't recall anything about Ian Cory, but I still said to him:

"That's the sort of person we want, he is at the London Bible College, and is interested in Youth Work."

However, we did nothing more about it for the time being, but made it a matter of prayer. Usually Tom is all for pushing doors, and is not one to remain quiescent, but although I tried to make him do something, advertise, write round, he said: "No, this is too important a matter for that. The Lord will send us the right person in His own time."

As it drew nearer to the summer, Tom said he would meet with a few of the key staff and have some definite prayer on the subject as to who was to take Oliver Styles's place. We met in our sitting room, and Tom, who had just gone to his office, wandered in, opening a letter marked "Private and Personal". We had our prayer, and at the end Tom said:

"I have just received a letter from Ian Cory. He tells me he wants to come and see me and discuss the future, and to know if I have any suggestions as to what kind of work he could take up."

I said: "So you wrote to him after all."

Tom said, "I didn't write to him. He has no idea that we are looking for anyone here."

So, to make a long story short, we wrote to Ian Cory and he came down to see us, and we discovered that he had many of the necessary qualifications for helping us. One was that, although he was a single man, he would very soon be married, and it was a job for a married man, so that they could be host and hostess at Frant. Ian Cory was at one time head boy at Repton School (which makes him very efficient in organising assistant hosts into their various duties!), and then he was at Oxford for four years and obtained his M.A. degree, and then went to the London Bible College for further training. This is the second year he has been with us, and he is proving every day the fact that the Lord sent him to us.

8 The Week Begins

I WILL describe some of the specialised Conferences later, but now I am going to give you some idea of what happens each week on the Conferences.

On Sundays we leave people free in the morning to go to the various local places of worship. Now, here we are exceedingly fortunate at Frinton in the fact that all the Protestant places of worship are very evangelical. The Church of England, the Parish Church—a very beautiful modern building—is an Evangelical Living, and we were warmly welcomed by the Rev. Ashford Smith when we came to Frinton, and on our very first Sunday he invited Tom to preach at the Harvest Thanksgiving Service.

The Free Church is a mixture between a Baptist Church and a Congregational Church, and many other nonconformists seem to foregather there as well. The Rev. Edgar Wright has been a tremendous help not only to our guests, but with the various Youth Organisations at his Church provides a spiritual home for many of the permanent members of the staff. It was on the second Sunday after we came to Frinton that he asked Tom to preach on the Sunday morning.

And then we are exceedingly blessed with the local brethren meeting here at Frinton, presided over by that saintly octogenarian Mr. Ernest Luff. I remember when I was a child of about five Mr. Ernest Luff of the Pilgrim Preachers came with one or two others and stayed in our home in the north of England. Of course, I thought he was a very old man even then; he had a beard and a very fatherly manner. He is a remarkable person, who organised and founded the Pilgrim Preachers, and went with them on their various tours, one of them going from Land's End to John o' Groats, and many other tours throughout the country, taking the Gospel to small villages and towns. At the beginning of the century he was led to come and settle down at Frinton, where he opened a Bible Bookshop, and for fifty years this has been his home. He looks very like one of the old patriarchs.

The first Christmas Day after we came to Frinton Mr. Luff was walking down Connaught Avenue and saw a small boy all dressed up as a Red Indian. He looked at the small boy, and in his kindly way said:

"You look to me just like a Red Indian."

The small boy looked up and said:

"And you look to me like Father Christmas."

Mr. Luff with the other brethren at the Gospel Hall has given our guests the warmest of welcomes, and made them feel thoroughly at home. Mr. Luff with his real knowledge of the Lord and sense of His Presence seems to impart that to everyone he meets.

He told me an interesting story about a Roman Catholic lady who stayed at Hildenborough Hall years ago when it was the Esplanade Hotel. She often came up to his bookshop, he told me, and could not understand why it was that he did not sell little images and crucifixes. She argued with him at some considerable length.

"If only you had these things, Mr. Luff," she said, "they would be such a help. People need these things to help them in worshipping God. They need the help of the virgin Mary, they need the help of a crucifix."

Mr. Luff told me that he prayed briefly for guidance, and then looked at her and quoted the hymn,

> Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
> More than all in Thee I find.

The lady said no more and went out of the shop. A few minutes later she came back again, took Mr. Luff by the hand and said:

"Quickly, take me into the room behind the shop and tell me what you mean. You have obviously got something I know nothing about."

Mr. Luff had the great joy of leading her to accept Christ as her Saviour, and to find in Him all that she needed. That woman became a wonderful witness for the Lord, and wherever she went she took Gospel booklets and copies of the New Testament. She travelled widely on the Continent, and she was always sending to Mr. Luff for books in the different Continental languages, so that she could give them away to other people to tell them how they could find Christ.

But to return to the Conference programme. After tea on

Sunday we sometimes have a session which is known as a Verse-by-Verse Bible Study. Many people consider this is one of the most useful sessions that is ever held at Hildenborough, because not only do people receive real help from the passage in hand, but it teaches them how to meditate for themselves on the Word of God. It is not a conversational Bible Study, in the accepted sense of the word, but the idea is that Christian people should learn how, in their devotional reading, to get a message from the Lord, and to meditate on the Word of God, and to see what He has to say to them in it. Tom explains to them that in having our quiet time we should be like a man talking face to face with his friend. It shouldn't be a time when first of all we read our Bible and God speaks to us, and then we pray and we speak to Him. A conversation, he says, is not like that—first one speaks and then the other; and in our Bible reading we should read it, meditate on it, pray it back to the Lord and receive the maximum amount of benefit from the few verses. One of the first points he makes is, "never attempt to read too many verses. This is like having too big a meal," he explains, "and you will get spiritual indigestion. This does not mean that you should not read the Bible at some length, it is a good thing to read even a whole book at a time, but not when you are trying to meditate upon it verse by verse." So we take a passage—for the sake of illustration shall we take the fifth chapter of Luke, verses 1-11?

First of all Tom explains we should pray that the Lord will open our understanding and help us to behold wondrous things out of His Law. So we have prayer together. Then he reads the passage through slowly from beginning to end. Then we go back to verse No. 1, and Tom reads that through very slowly and says: "Now we will be very quiet for sixty seconds, and we are going to meditate on this verse and see what the Lord has to say to us in it." He tells people what to look for. Is there some example to follow? some error to avoid? do we learn anything new about the Lord in this verse? do we learn something new about ourselves? is there something that we can turn into a prayer? is He telling us something, giving us some instruction for today from this verse? And then he slowly reads it through.

"And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret."

After the pause he asks anyone to say what the Lord has taught them in that verse. Someone perhaps may say that they have seen that people pressed upon the Lord to hear the Word of God in that day, and they want to ask the Lord to make them as keen this morning to hear the Word of God. One or two others make comments, and then Tom shows how that can be turned into a prayer. How we can say, "O God, help me to press upon Thee this morning to hear Thy Word."

Then we go on to the next verse:

"And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets."

Now someone here sees an example to follow. The fishermen were washing their nets. They knew they could never catch fish if their nets weren't clean. Someone says that this is an example to us that we shall never be able to win people to Christ if our lives aren't clean. We must see to it that our lives are consistent, and so we turn that into a prayer and say, "O Lord, help me to be industrious today so that I may be able to catch fish for Thee."

And we read on:

"And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship."

There is probably quite a barrage of suggestions of things to learn from this scripture. Each person wanting to be willing that their lives should be used by the Lord out of whom He can teach other people, saying that we should always have our lives available, so that the Lord can use us. Simon's ship was just at the right place at the right time, so that the Lord could use it. Now we ask the Lord that our lives may be ready in the day of His power.

"Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: knevertheless at Thy Word I will let down the net."

A great many ideas come from these two verses. Someone sees an example to follow. When the Lord tells us to do something that seems impossible, we must be like Simon and

say, "Nevertheless at Thy Word I *will*." Someone else sees an error to avoid, and points out that when the Lord says "Let down your *nets* for a draught," we must not be like Simon and say: "I will let down the *net*." Later on we see how Simon must have regretted the fact that he did not let down all his nets, because the net brake. And so we turn that into a prayer and say: "Lord, help me to trust Thee wholly, for I know I shall find Thee wholly true."

There may be other people too who find help from this verse, knowing that they have been ineffective, that they have toiled all night, but now the Master is going to take over, and He will direct their service. Maybe some discouraged person who has been working for the Lord will say, "I have toiled all night for Thee, Lord; show me how to fish."

And we come to verse 7:

> "And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."

What a lot of things the Lord says to different people on this verse. How we should be ready to co-operate with other Christians; when other people want our help we should be ready to come. The result of co-operating will be *both* the ships filled. We should never be exclusive in our thinking, we should share with other people, "Bear ye one another's burdens." There are many opportunities in these verse-by-verse Bible readings for finding parallel passages of Scripture.

There is no commentary on the Scripture like the Scripture itself, and Tom always encourages people to give him some parallel passage, and above all to keep on turning the verse into prayer so that it is becoming prayer and reading, prayer and reading all the time. And so the Scripture goes on, and it is surprising what a help this has been to us all. As one young convert said to us:

"At Hildenborough we have been given the tools, and it is for us to go away and do the job."

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Sometimes as an alternative to the Verse-by-Verse Bible reading we have a Brains Trust. These Brains Trusts, though sometimes hilarious, are always helpful and practical. We can discuss things on a Brains Trust that would never come into

the ordinary routine of the sessions. There are so many practical problems to which young people want an answer, and the questions come upon every subject from "make-up" to missionaries, dancing to discipleship, the problems of unconverted parents, unsympathetic ministers and godless organists. Heated discussions on the subject of "Television, a help or a hindrance?" "My Church is dead, but nearby there is a keen evangelical Church. Ought I to leave my Church in which I have been brought up, and go to the other, or stay where I am as a witness?"

On the teams we generally have people with differing ideas, and although they agree on the fundamentals there is often a great diversity of opinion as to detail. We like to differ so that it will set people thinking, and let them work out their decisions for themselves.

9 Making the Message Live

ON THE Sunday evenings the speaker is usually asked to make his address of a more evangelistic order. Although the majority who come to our Conferences are already committed Christians, each week there are a number who are not yet converted. Some, perhaps, who think they have been Christians all their lives, because they are regular Church members, communicants, or baptized, discover that although they have all the outward and visible signs of religion, the inward and spiritual grace has never yet been theirs. And there are others who have been brought by friends and are complete pagans, and that Gospel message on the Sunday night is especially for them. We do feel that if at the beginning of the week those who have not committed their lives to Christ are faced with this challenge, the rest of the week will be of much more value to them.

I remember a lad from the north of England who had no experience whatever of Christianity before he came to Hildenborough. Nothing really dawned on him until about Thursday, when he suddenly realised he was not a Christian, and committed his life to Christ then and there. Before that everything had gone over his head, and although he was enjoying himself, he did not know what it was all about. We had a suggestions box at that Conference, and asked the guests to give in ideas for improvements. That lad wrote:

"It would be much better if you would arrange to get us converted at the beginning of the week, because we would find the rest of the Conference much more helpful!"

We have some wonderful evangelistic preachers who come to Hildenborough. One whose visit we always enjoy is Mr. A. Lindsay Glegg. I think there are very few men who have given Tom such help as Mr. Glegg. He encouraged him as a young man and gave him a great many opportunities, and hardly a year has gone by at Hildenborough without a visit from him. The outstanding art in his evangelistic

preaching is his ability to illustrate both from anecdote and from story.

Speaking at the 8 o'clock session after dinner Mr. Glegg gave these two illustrations.

"The central fact of our faith is the Cross, a cruel, ugly Cross, and One hanging there broken and bleeding. Why should that be the end of a perfect, beautiful life? Why was the Cross necessary? To the eyes of the Roman it was a defeat, the worst thing he could think of. To the eyes of the Greek who loves beauty, culture and loveliness, here is a cruel Cross—away with it. In the eyes of the Jew, their own law said: 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree'; the Cross was abhorrent, and yet we Christians glory in the Cross. Why? Because Christ on the Cross offered Himself up for our sins, and God did something that could be done in no other way. Now that's the miracle and the mystery and the marvel of the Cross.

"Let me see if I can make it a little clearer by an illustration.

"When I was a youngster my brother and I pooled our finances and bought a wonderful air pistol. We had a frog in stone at the end of our garden, and on the top of the frog's head we put an empty bottle, which we potted at from the other end of the lawn, and when we hit the bottle, smashed it, another went up in its place. We had a wonderful afternoon's firing practice and in the evening we were resting quietly at home when there was a very vigorous knock at our front door. Well, we looked round the corner. My father happened to be there and opened the door, and we saw a policeman, and as my brother and I listened we heard murmurs about murder! We looked at each other, and then the story came out in the end.

"What had happened was that as we fired at the empty bottle some of our shots were a little low. They ricocheted off the head of the stone frog, over the garden wall, across the other garden and in at the bedroom window of a crusty old bachelor who had gone for a quiet siesta on Saturday afternoon! He was in charge of all the lighthouses round the coast of Britain. Sir William was his name, and he was in the Admiralty. We were duly summoned to the policeman's side and Sir William heard the explanation and said: 'Well, I suppose boys will be boys, but I don't know what the rising generation is coming to.'

"We discovered that the bullet had embedded itself in the wooden bed post as he was lying down there snoozing. He was a cute old boy and he lined up the bullet in the bed post along with the hole in the venetian blind and a hole through the window, got all three holes in a line and saw exactly where the bullet came from—hence the policeman at our front door. Due explanations were given and we had a severe talking to, but before Sir William went he said to my father—and this is what hangs in my memory ever since—'What about my window? Somebody's got to pay for it.' 'Ah!' my father said, 'certainly, certainly, you have it repaired and send the bill in to me. That's quite right, Sir William?' And the incident happily closed, but not that phrase in my memory—'Somebody must pay for it.'

"Now, somebody must pay for my sin. The penalty, the guilt, the judgment of my sin can never be excused. It must be met and paid for. Now here's the miracle of the Cross, that Christ came down from Heaven to live a perfect life and to offer a perfect sacrifice on the Cross for my sin.

> There was no other good enough to PAY the price of sin.
> He only could unlock the gates of Heaven and let me in.

"There's nothing I could do; there are no good works that I could offer to God. My only language can be:

> Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to Thy Cross I cling.

Do you see that? That's why I can be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Can I make it a little clearer to you? You know the one who forgives always has to suffer. I suppose that's a principle in life. I lent a man some money a year or two ago. He walked off and forgot all about what he owed me. There was nothing left for me to do but forgive him. I suppose I could have tracked him down and sold up his furniture and all the rest of it. But as I was a Christian I forgave him, but it was I who suffered. It was my money that went west. The one who forgives always suffers."

Mr. Glegg told another story, to drive home a point.

"Have you read the life of Fenton Hall? He was a great Christian. In his unconverted days he was Heavy-weight Boxing Champion in the Royal Air Force. Now that means something. After he was converted he went to College and

was trained and was then sent down to a Mission at Battersea quite near my Mission in London. Whenever I pass that Battersea Mission I think of Fenton Hall. He arrived there on New Year's Eve, before a Watchnight Service. People were gathered, and then some great tough fellows from Battersea came into the meeting just to make a row. They did not want anybody else to worship God, and they didn't want to themselves. They began to let out catcalls and to push each other and fight and disturb the whole place. The leader very wisely felt that they couldn't conduct a Watchnight Service like that, so he signed to the stewards, and before these tough fellows knew where they were, they were outside, and one of the stewards slammed the door, and bolted it to make quite certain. Unfortunately they bolted Fenton Hall outside, and there he was, standing with his back to the door. When all these tough fellows found they had been tricked out of the game they were up to, they said: 'All right—you can have it.' Their fists were clenched and they were really ready for fight. They didn't know who Fenton Hall was! He knew he had only got to let out; he'd got a right-hand punch that would have shaken the stoutest hearts in the boxing ring. He'd got a straight left that he could have let fly. All they would have to do was to ring for the ambulance to take away the wounded and the dead! He knew that perfectly well, but there he stood as these fellows came for him, and he thought: 'What am I going to do about it? My Lord forgave, and in order to forgive me He went through all the agony of the Cross. The one that forgives has got to suffer, and if I'm going to forgive these fellows I'll have to take this thrashing.' He stood there with his hands behind his back as they came for him and slugged him right and left. And when the service was over, they unlocked the doors and the people streamed out and they found Fenton Hall half dead in a pool of his own blood. But you go to Battersea today, and see some of those tough fellows. They discovered who he was, and it broke them down.

"Now God in Christ had to suffer if you and I are to be forgiven. There was no other way to reconcile men to God, and God took that supreme step. Out of a heart of love He would stop at nothing, and He sent down His own Beloved Son to go to the length of that cruel, ugly, shameful Cross and to hang there in agony and then to take all the guilt and the burden of the sin of the world upon Himself, and go down into

the realm of death for you and for me, that He might reconcile you to God.

"Are you reconciled? Have you ever come to Christ and thanked Him? Have you laid hold of what He accomplished for you on Calvary's Cross? Have you sought and found His forgiveness?"

ON A Conference, Monday morning dawns without any "Monday morning feeling", we hope. Guests are wakened up over the public address system by Tom with some gramophone records and a Scripture reading. Some people are a little apprehensive about this before they come: they imagine there will be a blaring loudspeaker saying "Wakey, wakey, rise and shine" and other remarks offensive to the heavy sleeper. But most people, having been to Hildenborough, feel there is something rather wonderful about being wakened out of deep sleep with "O for a thousand tongues to sing" or some other great hymn, and then to hear the words of Scripture first thing in the morning.

At breakfast on Monday the guests are told of all the sporting activities of the week and of the excursions on which they can go. We take parties to Felixstowe, Bury St. Edmunds and Lavenham, through some wonderful old Essex villages, and then to the Constable country to see Flatford Mill, East Bergholt and other places made famous by Constable's paintings. In Kent we used to have an excursion each day, but when people come to the sea they are rather loath to leave it, so excursions are not such a feature of Frinton as they were in Kent. The guests are told about the tennis courts and about the golf course and all the other games of the week.

They are also warned that immediately after the session they are to have their photographs taken as a group. This is quite an ordeal for some, but if you have had your photograph taken every Monday as we have for the past twelve years between the months of May and October it is something that you get quite used to. Proceedings are usually enlivened by Tom telling the famous story about the guest speaker of the week.

"When our guest speaker went to have his photograph taken," he tells us, "he looked at the photographer and said, 'Mr. Photographer, I hope you will do me justice.'

"And the photographer looked at the speaker (Tom tells us)

and said, 'Sir, what you want is not justice but . . .'" and at that point all the guests who have been before take up the tale and say "But MERCY!" I think we are like children, and we all enjoy the repetition.

Monday for me is always connected in my mind with a Food Conference. Each week Miss Hay and the cooks meet for a food conference and I go along to criticise and suggest. A great many things have to be taken into consideration in planning the week's menus. We naturally have a price ceiling and we must not go above that, but it is surprising what you can do, even so, to make the food interesting and have variety.

"No," says Miss Hay, "we can't have carrots with that because we are having a tomato sauce—too much of the same colour." So we have to decide on parsley sauce.

"No, we can't have rice pudding after fish—it's all the same colour." So we have to change it to a jam tart.

It is surprising what an influence colour has in cookery. Things not only have to taste nice but they have to look nice. We try to have a different menu for the entire fortnight, so that those staying for two weeks won't have to have the same things too often. We are always on the lookout for new ideas for sweets, anything to vary the menu, and I think we feel rewarded when so many guests express a very real appreciation of the different things we put on. I must say that when we sit down to one of our meals like scallop of veal with slices of lemon, and anchovy, and decorated with hard-boiled egg, I think to myself "You wouldn't get a better meal than this anywhere." Of course Friday night is chicken night, and that is always a great high spot of the week. Everyone seems to enjoy roast chicken, and there is something festive about it for a farewell dinner.

I often have bright new ideas, but Miss Hay is very conservative. She says to my bright suggestion, "How will it turn out?" She belongs to the school of thought that thinks the rice pudding you know is better than the soufflé you don't know. And I say, "We won't know until we try", and she says, "It's too late then." So we try to plan some of these new experiments for the smaller Conferences. It is, of course, easier at the June Conferences and September Conferences, when we have smaller numbers, to serve more specialised things, and it should be an added inducement for people to come to the off-season Conferences. Tom sometimes looks in on the

Food Conference and, having made some facetious suggestions such as starting off with smoked salmon and caviar, going on to roast duck and finishing up with baked Alaska, he comes down to earth and gives us the benefits of his comments. Whereas the majority of women like made-up dishes, the majority of men like roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and plenty of it, with not much variety. I think on the whole we manage to give them variety and everyone seems well satisfied. I am tremendously interested in cooking myself, as anyone will gather who has read my novel *Madame Estelle*, and I do try to take a very lively interest in this side of the work.

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Every morning the session is entirely in the hands of the guest speaker, and it usually takes the form of a Bible study. The guest speaker will either expound some book of the Bible, or will have some series of special subjects, but it will be something concerning the fundamentals of the faith. I am going to take you over now to the Conference Hall where you can listen in to one of our most popular guest speakers, Stephen Olford, giving us one of his Bible Readings.

Stephen Olford has been a friend of my husband's for many years. He was born in Africa of missionary parents, and spent a great deal of his childhood out there and, although converted as a small child, as a young man he completely kicked over the traces and lived just for himself. It was not until he was at the point of death and received a letter from his father in Africa which warned him "only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Jesus will last", that Stephen realised that his life would very shortly be over and that very little had been done for the Lord Jesus at all. After a miraculous recovery from what seemed like certain death he dedicated his life fully to Christ and has done a wonderful work for the Lord ever since. Down at Newport he worked among the troops during the war and he has conducted a great many evangelistic campaigns all over the country. He is at present the Minister of Duke Street Baptist Church, and we count it a great privilege to have him as a speaker each year at our Conferences.

We will go over to the Conference Hall. This is situated in the Lodge, and can hold up to a hundred and fifty people, but when the Conference gets bigger than that we have our sessions in the new hall at the Free Church, which is kindly lent to us and has accommodation for well over two hundred. But there

is an intimate atmosphere about our own Conference Hall that we always enjoy. It is a delightful room. Round the walls of the Hall there are emblems and badges of the majority of the evangelical youth organisations, such as Covenanters, Boys' Brigade, Campaigners, Crusaders. Although singing is a feature at our evening session, at the morning session we get down to business almost straight away, and after a hymn and a prayer here is the Rev. Stephen Olford giving us his talk. He is taking as his subject:

THE POT OF OIL

Reading: 2 Kings IV, 1–7

Here is an Old Testament story full of typical teaching, concerning the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. It illustrates how God can take a Christian, who is a victim of spiritual depression, poverty and bondage, and fill him with joy, richness and liberty for effective service.

If you look again at the story, you will observe that the woman had reached a place of complete bankruptcy; and, faced with the inevitable shame and embarrassment of not being able to meet her obligations, she throws herself on the mercy of the man of God. If only she had sought his advice at an earlier date, it is quite probable that she would never have had to reach this state of affairs.

Tell me, is this a picture of your life? Have you allowed circumstances and unfulfilled obligations to overwhelm you like a flood? If so, why is it you have not turned to the Man at God's right hand and asked for His guidance and intervention in your situation?

When the Widow sought the advice of Elisha, he asked her a most significant question. He said: "Tell me, what hast thou in the house?" (v. 2). The solution to her problem largely depended upon her answer. If the reply had been "I have nothing in the house", then Elisha would have had nothing to work upon. In a similar way, the question that God would ask of us is whether or not we have—not so much something as Someone, in the house of our lives. For as we proceed with this story, it seems quite clear that the POT OF OIL is a symbol of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, in at least three respects:—

1. *The Identity of the Spirit in Our Lives*

"Tell me," asked the man of God, "what hast thou in the house?" And she said: "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil" (v. 2).

From the general teaching of the New Testament, we note that there are at least two ways in which we may identify the Holy Spirit in our lives:

(1) *By His Indwelling.* "What hast thou IN THE HOUSE?" (v. 2). Whatever else this woman had sold or parted with, she had retained this pot of oil. How true this is in the life of a Christian. Whatever calamities may befall him in terms of wealth, health, or loss of loved ones, he can never part with or lose the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Corinthian Church had deteriorated greatly in the absence of the Apostle. They had lost much of their original purity, power and grace. But Paul had no hesitation in saying to them: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" (1 Corinthians VI, 19).

So we see that the Holy Spirit may be identified by His indwelling. He also may be identified:

(2) *By His Anointing.* Said the Widow: "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil" (v. 2). A POT OF OIL in the house was for the purpose of anointing. In normal circumstances it was used every day, following the regular ablutions. Its personal use indicated inward gladness and outward brightness. So Solomon tells us that "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart" (Proverbs XXVII, 9). And David remarks that "Oil is to make the face to shine" (Psalm CIV, 15).

In terms of New Testament teaching, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is the secret of inward revelation and outward radiance. John says: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (1 John II, 27). In short, the Apostle is saying: "The anointing teaching you of all things . . . ye shall abide in Him."

So we see that the inward revelation comes through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, while the outward radiance is dependent upon a life of moment-by-moment abiding. Show me a

life that is abiding in the Lord Jesus, and I will show you a man who not only knows the anointing of the Spirit upon him, but also reflects something of the radiance of the indwelling Christ.

From these two thoughts, therefore, we deduce that every true believer may identify the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life by the fact of His Indwelling and Anointing.

What is your answer then, to the question, "What hast thou in the house?" Can you say with decided conviction: "I have a pot of oil in the house?" If you cannot answer thus, then can you be truly born again? for remember, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans VIII, 9).

The second respect in which THE POT OF OIL is the symbol of the Holy Spirit is what we may term:

II. *The Reality of the Spirit in Our Lives*

Whatever the pot of oil had meant to this woman in the past, she obviously had not learned the secret of its full significance and power, under God. But when Elisha took hold of the situation, he indicated certain conditions in which the pot of oil would become a vital reality.

(1) *Provided Emptiness.* He commanded: "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few" (v. 3). The relative value of each vessel to this woman was its capacity to receive. The more vessels she provided, the more oil she obtained. On the other hand, when she ceased to borrow vessels, the oil stayed.

Here is a lesson which is both wonderful and solemn. God can only fill the capacities that we make available. That is why Paul takes the trouble to state a complementary truth when writing his twin epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. In Colossians, he exhorts: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (III, 16); while in the parallel passage in Ephesians, he commands: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit" (V, 18). The implication is clear. The Word of God makes the capacity in our lives, while the Spirit of God fills that capacity. What we have to watch, however, is that the capacities that are available are not half filled with something else.

Let me illustrate as follows: I could fill a tumbler with pebbles, and yet at the same time put quite a lot of water in it, by reason of the fact that between the pebbles there are

spaces. The tumbler certainly has water in it, but it is not *full* of water. If it is to be full of water, it must be first emptied of the pebbles; and until every pebble has been removed, I cannot honestly say it is full of water.

Similarly, in our lives there must be, first of all, a provided emptiness before the Holy Spirit can fill, and that emptying process goes on day by day as the Word of God makes room in our lives. Thus it becomes true that the Holy Spirit fills our lives according to our capacity. The measure of fulness in my life today should be infinitely more than it was yesterday. There should be no fixation point in the Christian experience, for the Word of God is ever and always deepening the spiritual life. How sincere we ought to be, then, when we sing those words:

> Emptied, that Thou shouldest fill me,
> A clean vessel in Thy hand;
> With no power but as Thou givest,
> Graciously with each command.

Elisha's second condition was:

(2) *Private Prayerfulness*. He said: "When thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons" (v. 4). It is most important and instructive to observe that the reality and fulness of the Spirit in a believer's life is always associated with quiet waiting upon God. Jesus said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke XI, 13).

Without doubt, the principle of asking applies to the initial receiving of the Spirit, as well as to the continual fulness of the same Spirit. But asking is praying; and the praying which really counts—and I may add, costs—is behind shut doors. You will remember that in the Sermon on the Mount the Master taught His disciples, saying: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew VI, 6). Then later, when the Lord Jesus prepared His disciples for the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, He bade them tarry in Jerusalem. To the hundred-and-twenty who waited behind shut doors, this meant Private Prayerfulness.

If you want to know the reality of the Holy Spirit in your

life, you will have to pay the price of shutting the door of quiet prayerfulness upon the many legitimate and often pleasant calls and demands of business, domestic and social life. I am absolutely convinced that the life that is too busy to spend at least one hour with God, in the light of His Word and in the atmosphere of prayer, is a life that is *too* busy, and therefore out of adjustment to the will of God. But I can hear someone saying: "Surely one can go right through life each day in an attitude of prayer? What need is there, therefore, for shutting oneself up behind closed doors?" The answer is that an attitude of prayer flows from an activity of prayer. The one cannot substitute the other: they are complementary. And in this materialistic world in which we live, when we are so liable to be caught up in the whirl of a fast moving programme, there is an increasing need to discipline our devotional life.

Then there was a third condition:

(3) *Personal Yieldedness.* Said the man of God: "Thou . . . shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full" (v. 4). What a moment this was in the experience of this woman! How far was she prepared to prove the Prophet's promise, by submitting herself to the pouring out of the oil? The whole idea might have appeared fantastic, but in simple faith she yielded and the miracle happened—the oil flowed. The principle is equally true in the spiritual realm. It is only as we personally yield to the indwelling Spirit that His life begins to flow from us. Peter testified to this when he said: "The Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts V, 32).

The story shows us that, in keeping with the word of the man of God, the pot of oil filled the measure of the provided capacity. God will do the same for us if only we are empty, prayerful and yielded. Are you prepared for such emptiness, prayerfulness and yieldedness? To only one Man in the Universe could God give the Holy Spirit without measure, and that was the Lord Jesus. His capacity was such that John could say: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him" (John III, 34).

One other aspect in which THE POT OF OIL is the symbol of the Holy Spirit is that of:

III. *The Sufficiency of the Spirit in Our Lives*

Once the oil had been poured out, Elisha said: "Go, sell the

oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest" (v. 7). How relevant and practical are these words! They certainly teach us that the sufficiency of the spirit is a blessing which is related to everyday life. No wonder Paul exclaims, at a time of life which was particularly grim for him: "Our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians III, 5).

We notice from the narrative that the sufficiency of the oil provided for the two obligations of life:

(1) *Public Service.* "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt." Did you know that there are two senses in which every believer is in debt? First, he is in debt to God. Paul tells us that "we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh" (Romans VIII, 12), implying, of course, that we are in debt to live unto God from the moment we accept union with Christ in His death. One of the most solemn facts to recognise is that all time lived outside the sufficiency of God by His Spirit is wasted and, therefore, lost. This is why Paul adds: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans VIII, 13).

Then, secondly, the believer is in debt to man. Listen to the Apostle revealing the thoughts of his heart. "I am debtor," he says, "both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise" (Romans I, 14). Nothing less than a real sense of the debt he owed to mankind, in terms of his prayers, ministry and gospel, could have made him employ such language. It would certainly make some of us reconsider what is available to us in the Sufficiency of the Spirit, if we only realised that God holds us responsible for fulfilling our obligations in the Gospel to every man and woman we meet. It may be by the way we speak, or simply by the way we act. In other words, we only discharge our debts by releasing from our lives at every point of contact, something of the sufficiency of God through the presence of the indwelling Spirit.

The second obligation of life is:

(2) *Private Sustenance.* The injunction was clear: "Live thou and thy children of the rest" (v. 7). While Public Service is an obligation which every believer must fulfil, this fact does not in any way excuse him of his personal responsibility to his private life. Were this principle duly regarded and obeyed, we should not be for ever hearing the notorious stories of certain Christians who behave like saints in public, but like devils in

private. God holds every true Christian responsible for a life of tenderness, sympathy, thoughtfulness and humility in the home. The Widow had to keep her own life healthy, strong and useful, as well as the lives of her sons. What a word this is to husbands concerning their wives; wives concerning their husbands; parents concerning their children; yes, and children concerning their parents.

I am not surprised to note that when Paul speaks of the fulness of the Holy Spirit in his letter to the Ephesians, it is primarily in a context of family life. How necessary, then, his exhortation: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians V, 25). This means that if we are drawing our sufficiency for our private sustenance in the way we walk and talk, then our private as well as public life will reveal that we are men and women who know the Identity, Reality and Sufficiency of the Holy Ghost.

Have you THE POT OF OIL in the house of your life? If so, provide the Emptiness, give yourself the Prayerfulness and Yieldedness, and know henceforth the life of Sufficiency in the Spirit.

May your earnest prayer be:

For this I pray, Lord; for this I plead—
Thy Spirit's fulness flood my soul;
Be thou enthroned, Lord, within my heart,
And all my yielded life control.

AT OUR evening sessions community singing is much more of a feature. Tom is a past master in the art of making people sing, and I think it is one of his particular gifts. We feature not only choruses but the good singing of real old-fashioned hymns. One of the things that we have done since starting the Conference Centre is to produce many hymn books. *Hymns for Community Singing* has been used in campaigns for many years now, and thousands and thousands of copies have been sold. And a more recent production is *Songs of Faith,* which is more suitable for conventions and contains many of the best hymns of the English hymnary.

One of the essential adjuncts to community singing is a really good pianist, and Tom being Welsh is particularly sensitive to his accompanist. Many people who are quite good performers on the piano are not up to his standard for accompanying community singing. The two who help us most in the Conference Centre are Gordon Brattle, who in private life is a dentist, so when being introduced he always has to put up with the crack that he hammers the ivories all day in his clinic as a dentist and then at night on the piano! The other pianist is Beryl Jones, who came to us first as a schoolgirl of sixteen and who has played the piano in the Albert Hall and at many Conferences, and now, since graduating from Cambridge, is a Probation Officer. She still manages to give us quite a lot of her time as a Conference pianist.

Gordon has composed a number of hymns and choruses and these have been produced in some of the books, such as *Hildenborough Harmonies* and *This is my Song.* Also in the musical department we have Linda Barnes, or rather Linda Taylor as she is called now, since she married the Rev. John Taylor. Linda first came to us as a teenager. She was not remotely interested in spiritual things then, but a party from the school had invited her to come with them to Hildenborough and Linda came. It was at that first Conference that she

realised her need of a Saviour and she became a Christian. Very shortly after that she found she had the ability to put what she felt into song, and the music of one of the first hymns, *Jesus, my Saviour, lives in my heart,* for which she wrote both the music and the words, was the expression of her own heart and testimony and has been very popular. Her chorus *"Bring other people, dear Lord, to Thee"* has been used as a prayer and has been sung as a chorus by thousands of people. One of her more recent hymns, "Jesus was praying for me", was played on the Chapel in the Valley programme on the B.B.C. not very long ago.

John Taylor helped us as an assistant host all through his university days, and he and Linda make a wonderful pair. He is in his first curacy down at Morden, and Linda is ideally suited to be a vicar's wife. But, of course, we can never remember that Linda Barnes is Linda Taylor, and recently in a large campaign in Bradford where they were both helping, Tom had the absence of mind to introduce them as Mr. and Mrs. John Barnes. When he apologised profusely about it afterwards, John accepted his apology and then said rather acidly "Good-night, Mr. Sinclair", invoking to his aid, of course, my maiden name!

The evening meetings take a variety of different forms. We always feel there is great value in discussion, and Tom has a distinctive and socratic method of conducting a discussion which brings the information out of people by means of questions, and a great deal of useful information is extracted. We very often have a discussion on the Quiet Time and why we should pray. The points that arise are usually first of all the necessity of having a Quiet Time, our utter dependence on the Lord in prayer, and the fact that it is as we pray and read the Bible that we receive spiritual food and strength for the day. Out of this arises the point that if at all possible it is better to have your Quiet Time early in the day, rather than leaving it until later.

We have already discussed the question of how to read and meditate on the Scriptures, and when it comes to prayer many useful suggestions are made.

A discussion on this subject never fails to stimulate the desire for prayer amongst those who already have made the practice of a regular Quiet Time part of their daily life; and for those whose prayers have never gone beyond the child's prayer of

committal by the bedside, a whole new vista is opened of what a prayer life can be. We find out why we should pray, first because we are commanded to, and because it is through prayer that we commune with God and draw our resources from Him.

A great many practical suggestions are made to help us to be more effective in prayer, from the blessing of an alarm clock for the sleepy head, to a prayer list to help the woolly head.

First of all prayer should be worship, thanking the Lord for what He is and what He has done. Then follows supplication, when we make our requests known to the Lord. People suggest the various things about which it is suitable to pray: our own doings, our future, our plans, asking the Lord for guidance for our pathway. And then a very important feature is that of intercession. Many people who come to Conferences have never heard of a prayer list, and some who have heard have an idea that it is rather unscriptural to do things in a methodical way. They like, so they say, to leave it to their own imagination, to leave it so that they can pray as they are lead by the Spirit at the time, that the people for whom they ought to pray will come to their mind. Many, however, feel that the Holy Spirit is very well able to lead us to be methodical and we have advocated at Conferences many times the use of the prayer list. Many people obtain a copy of the small booklet *Effective Prayer* which gives a space for each day where the names of people for whom we ought to pray can be entered: the names of our family, the minister, different missionaries for whom we should pray, friends, particularly people for whose conversion we should be praying daily. As a result of this discussion on the Quiet Time many people whose prayer life has been spasmodic and unmethodical go away determined to do business with God daily.

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We have had many discussions on the fascinating subject of Guidance. I think we are all agreed that it is a subject we can so easily discuss, but when it comes down to getting guidance for ourselves it is very often much more difficult. And the various ways in which the Lord can guide us come up in discussion—through the regular reading of the Word of God rather than the lucky-dip method when we open our Bible and put our finger on the place. Tom often tells the story of the old lady who opened her Bible like that, and first of all found her finger on the index, then she found herself on the space between the

Old and New Testaments, and then she found herself pointing to one of the maps at the back, and she said with some degree of impatience "Dear, dear, what is the good Lord thinking of?"

No, I think that the Lord expects us to get our guidance through our regular daily reading of His Word, and it is surprising how He can guide us through that. Not only does He guide through our regular reading of the Bible, but the Lord guides us through our own faculty, common sense. "The meek will He guide in judgment." He will guide us through our own judgment, provided of course that our judgment is kept under his control. If we "acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths". The danger, we have so often heard in discussions, is that we seek guidance when some big decision is to be made, but when it is some small thing, one of the ordinary everyday things of life, we go our own way. But it is as we acknowledge the Lord, bring ourselves under His subjection and sovereignty in all our ways, that we can count on Him to direct our paths. Another helpful means of guidance is consulting with older Christian friends, not, of course, allowing them to make the decision for us in order to get out of having to decide, but their experience is longer than ours and they can advise us.

Then, of course, circumstances play a very real part in guidance. We find that, as I said earlier of our move to Frinton, circumstances point the way to go. Guidance is never contrary to duty. For instance, the Lord would hardly be likely to guide a person to marry someone who was not a Christian when He has given us specific command that this is not to be; we are not to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers". He is not likely to guide someone to go to the mission field if looking after an invalid parent is the obvious duty of that person. So many of our guests are at the age when they have to decide about their careers and about their future that a discussion on guidance can give them the tools they need in helping to make their decisions.

Talking of Guidance reminds me of some very helpful illustrations used by my brother-in-law, the Rev. Dick Rees, on this subject. Dick is a very regular conference speaker. He usually gives us two or three weeks a season, and Tom, feeling confident he is leaving everything in good hands, is able to have a week away and leave Dick to direct the Conference as well as speak.

For many years Dick was the vicar of a parish, having

worked in Watford, Chatham, Hove and Southborough, but during recent years he has been increasingly conscious of a call to conduct Parish Campaigns both in this country and in Canada. The openings for these have increased, so that three years ago he resigned his living in Southborough and launched out, taking mission after mission.

He has given me permission to quote the following illustrations as he gave them a few weeks ago.

"Just after August this year I was travelling back home after taking duty in Christ Church, Amsterdam. I was flying by air across the sea, and when we got some fifty miles out one engine of the aircraft began to cough and splutter and after a while it stopped altogether.

"As soon as the engine stopped the pressurising equipment of the aircraft failed to function, and cold air rushing into the very hot atmosphere caused a sort of mist and snow to fill the cabin, and I think one or two of the passengers were rather alarmed because they thought it was fire.

"Sitting just in front of me was a passenger who became very frightened at this, and shouting at the steward he pointed to one of the propellers and said,

" 'Look, Steward, that propeller has stopped. Does that mean the aircraft has broken down? Are we going to crash? Have we had it?' and in various other statements, he gave vent to the panic that was in his heart.

"I shall never forget what the steward said. I don't know whether it came spontaneously or whether it was part and parcel of his training, but he rapped out this in a very determined voice and it had an amazing effect on the passengers. This is what he said:

" 'Sir, on the K.L.M. we have every confidence in the captain of the aircraft.'

"He said this with such force that the passenger sat right back in his seat and was completely and utterly silenced.

"If our trust is in God we can have every confidence that our God will see us through. Need I say that the pilot of the aircraft justified the steward's good opinion, and we made a perfect landing.

"Another experience which I had in an aircraft also gives a little light on the way in which God guides His people. Two or three years ago I was flying back from New York. We had a good crossing and made an excellent landing in Shannon,

Ireland, where we got the information that London Airport was quite clear for us to proceed.

"So we took off early one December morning to make our way from Western Ireland to London. Everything went well, but as we flew over the western counties of England we looked out of the aircraft and realised that a morning mist had suddenly covered the whole of the country. As we got nearer to London we realised that the morning mist had developed into a good, thick black fog. We flew over the fog for a long while and after a time we felt the engines of the machine throttle back and we went nearer and nearer to this great big fog bank. Then we hit it. Everything was enveloped in gloom, so dense that we couldn't see the tips of the wings of the aircraft. However, we went on and on and on through this black fog.

"After a while a light, a second light, a third light—we were right down on the centre runway of London Airport. We had made a perfect landing. What was the reason for this? When we were well above the fog the navigator radioed to Ground Control:

" 'You'll have to bring me in blind.' Forthwith the Ground Control focused a radio beam on the plane, and while we kept in the centre of the beam there was complete silence in the navigator's headphones. If we went too far to port, too far starboard, too high, too low, a noise came in the headphones, and instantly the navigator, knowing we were off the beam, took the necessary steps to bring us right back again into the centre of the beam.

"The Will of God is like that. While we are in the centre of His Will, there is a quietness, a peace, a poise in our hearts. When we get off the Will of God we begin to be uneasy. Dante put it superbly: 'In His Will is our peace'; and although many years have gone by since Dante wrote that, it is every bit as true now as it was then. If we are dead in line with the Will of God, we know God's peace in our hearts."

Speaking from his personal experience in the services, the Rev. Dick Rees gave us this illustration:

"When I first joined the R.A.F. they gave me a book. I had to sign for it about five times, I think. I was also expected to keep it up to date. It was called *King's Regulations,* and I found that book contained a very large number of instructions for the conduct of officers and men in the Royal Air Force. I

also noticed that every day on the Station somebody put up several pages of orders—we called these Daily Routine Orders, or D.R.O.s for short.

"I also noticed that wherever I went I came under the command of a senior officer. My life therefore in the Royal Air Force was governed by a book, by daily routine orders and by the voice of a commanding officer.

"What is true of an airman in the service is also true of the Christian in his daily life. God guides His people first by a Book. That Book is, of course, the Bible. If we read the Bible systematically day by day, if we read it carefully and thoughtfully and try to apply it to our own lives, God guides us in a very wonderful way. We get to know His will, through our relationships with Him, with others and with ourselves.

"Secondly, God guides us through Daily Routine Orders. We get these in Prayer. For prayer is not only 'Hear, Lord, Thy servant speaketh,' it is also, as Samuel knew, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' If we are prepared to pray, God will talk to us by putting ideas into our minds during our prayer time. The more we pray over these ideas the more certain we are that they are the Will of God for us. When we have this conviction in our hearts, we then seek to put into practice what we believe to be the will of our Master.

"Thirdly, God guides His people by His voice. Sometimes it comes to us through our friends, sometimes through our conscience, sometimes through our thinking, sometimes through circumstances. But as an airman will know and recognise the voice of his commanding officer, in the same way the Christian man will know and recognise the Voice of his God.

"That is how God guides the Christian: through the Book, called the Bible, through Daily Routine Orders received by prayer, through His spoken Voice, whether it be through our friends, circumstances, or thinking."

DURING the week there is generally some missionary note sounded, when either a visiting missionary will speak, or there will be a talk on the need for Christian workers both at home and abroad.

Each speaker has his own characteristic line, and getting such wonderful speakers as we do, I often think, particularly for those on the staff at Hildenborough, to attend a season of conferences is as valuable as going to a Bible College. Recently we had the Rev. Alan Redpath with us. At one time, when he lived in this country, no conference season was ever complete without a visit from him. We never forget the time when Alan and Marjorie visited us in the winter. It was frosty and Alan wondered if the ice on the lily pond would bear his weight. It didn't! There was a splash and a shout, and Alan disappeared up to his neck. His wife, Marjorie, was most unperturbed, and only remarked:

"Alan dear, what *are* you doing?" to which her husband replied with commendable restraint:

"What d'you think?"

Alan was the Guest Speaker during the week when we had our first broadcast. The very first time Tom was on the air with the B.B.C., when the Evening Service was broadcast from the lounge of Hildenborough Hall, Kent, we managed to get 180 people into that lounge by taking out much of the big furniture, and that was the first of many broadcast opportunities that Tom has had. Some of them were from Studios, and a notable series was held during our first season at Frinton, when for the first time in its history Frinton-on-Sea was "on the air", and the People's Service each Sunday morning was broadcast from our Conference Hall. I must digress for a moment and tell you about it.

Now it is one thing to arrange a broadcast with a congregation when you have several weeks beforehand to practise the hymns, and you know your choir, and you can have their

voices specially chosen, but I cannot think of anything more hair-raising than those four weeks of People's Services, when our guests arrived sometimes quite late on the Saturday night, but by 11.30 the following morning, out of those people, we had to find and train a choir to sing four hymns, not only to find the good voices but also weed out those who sang out of tune! We had to have several rehearsals and go on the air at 11.30. As I say, it was hair-raising! We wrote to some beforehand to find out who could sing, but that was sometimes even more difficult, because people who can't sing think they can, and we had to find out the modest people who thought they couldn't and really could. We had to remember, too, that they were on holiday, that we couldn't make them practise all night. We had one practice, on Saturday night, at 10 o'clock after our evening meeting, and then directly after breakfast the following morning we went to the Conference Hall and practised even further. We took tape recordings of the results, and they were really astonishingly good considering all that we went through beforehand. We received a great many encouraging letters after the programmes, which were designed of course particularly for those who do not go to Church.

But, I was talking about Alan Redpath's visit! What a joy it was to have him with us once again at Frinton. Alan Redpath is a fellow "Geordie", as we call it; in other words he and I were both born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. After training as a chartered accountant, and being with the I.C.I. for some time, he felt that it was the Lord's Will for him to go into whole-time service, and joined the staff of the National Young Life Campaign. Then he was invited to become the Minister of Duke Street Church, Richmond, and from a small congregation he built up that work, organised the services in the Theatre on Sunday nights, and was the pioneer of the great work that is done there today.

It was a tremendous decision for him to make, when he was invited to go out as the Minister of the Moody Memorial Church, Chicago. It was no easy thing for any man to undertake, to follow in a Church which before had as pastors such men as D. L. Moody and Dr. R. A. Torrey, and then for many years Dr. Harry Ironside—a Church which seats four thousand people, and has nearly three thousand active members—the Church with an annual turnover of one hundred and fifty

thousand pounds—a Church which has 115 full-time missionaries, which gives a thousand pounds a week for their support! But this was a call from the Lord, and although Alan Redpath was never one who had wanted to leave his own homeland, this was an opportunity that he could not ignore. Alan has done wonders out there in the Moody Church; it cannot have been easy for him, but his sincerity, spirituality and integrity have won their way, and he has now been invited to stay on indefinitely.

Alan Redpath is a man who always has some particular burden on his heart for the time, and we noticed at the Conference that his particular burden on this visit to Britain was the importance of good works in addition to faith. The stress in time past, he said, has been far too much on Grace, far too much on "only believe" and good works were of no value, but Alan was stressing tremendously the words of James, when he says: "Though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" In other words, if he says he has faith, and hasn't the corresponding good works, has he the right kind of faith? Let us go to the Conference Hall and listen to Alan giving one of his characteristic talks on Matthew XXV.

Reading: Matthew XXV, 14–30

I would like to consider this parable of the talents to illustrate a very important principle of life, that for a moment we may forget what our particular profession of faith may be, whether we claim to be mature Christians, young Christians, or not even Christians of any sort. I want you to think about this parable because it is to do with our personal responsibilities to God in the time between the day when Jesus came and when He shall yet come again.

I am going to try to stick closely to the text and the truth of this amazing parable told on the very eve of the Cross in relation to the fact that one day Christ was going to come back again to reckon with His servants. Here, then, is a story in the first instance of what you might call the capital and the investment of spiritual truth. The King, or if you like the householder, who travelled into a far country, called unto himself his own servants and delivered unto them his goods.

Now, let's just pause there to define two words very clearly.

First the word "servant", a Greek word which has a very simple, straightforward meaning. It means "bondslave", and no matter how any of us may respond to the claims of Christ, that is how He regards each of us. We are His by redemption. "Ye are not your own . . . ye are bought with a price," said the Apostle Paul.

I want you to recognise that heaven looks upon you as a bondslave of Jesus. Now you know that doesn't mean a life of misery, because it is when you begin to acknowledge with glad surrender and abandonment the authority of Jesus Christ that you step into a wonderful sense of liberty and freedom and joy. When He is undisputed Lord we can look up into His face and say: "Yes, Lord, I am your servant, gladly so, every bit of my life is branded with the marks of the Cross. I owe You the right to rule, to govern my life without any question whatsoever."

HIS AUTHORITY

It is interesting that the Lord Jesus faced bewildered, terrified disciples after His resurrection and said: "As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." And these two words in the English translation are just the same. As the Father sent, even so send. But they are different words. They really mean this: "As the Father has sent Me with all authority, even so send I you under My authority." All authority is with Him, and I am sent therefore out into the world under His authority. And the Christian who is under the authority of the Lord who gladly acknowledges his sovereign right to every piece of service I can do Him, is a Christian who is living in happy freedom and glorious liberty, and in victory over the powers of darkness. You see the authority over the powers of Satan is in the Person of Jesus Christ, not in you, and Christ will not give you authority, but will give you power, and that power is always dependent on your submission to His authority.

Forgive me reminding you of something that took place years ago when I was doing evangelistic work in Britain. I had a 9 h.p. Singer Bantam, the sort of car I personally don't get into, I put it on. I was travelling along a road I had not been along before, in the Peak District of Derbyshire, and arrived at the foot of a colossal hill. I saw at the bottom of

the hill a signpost which said "Gradient one in four", and I thought about my nine horse-power and my little Singer Bantam, but then, just beside the road there was a huge hoarding which was advertising a particular brand of petrol. And this was a terrific advertisement. It was a picture of that particular hill—that hairpin-bend—with a racing car roaring up this hill at about ninety miles an hour, and on top of this picture was written "Ethyl for Power—just try it." Well now, that made me feel good, because only twenty miles previously my Singer Bantam had had a good tankful of Ethyl, so I put my foot on the accelerator and awaited developments. But somehow we didn't quite go up at that speed. Halfway up that very precipitous hill—it was pouring with rain as it usually is round there—just before I came to a very cruel corkscrew bend, a drop of water got into the carburettor of that engine, and five of those horses died on the spot, and we struggled up this hill with four live horses, and got to the top, boiling and chugging away, missing on most of the cylinders. When I eventually recovered from the climb I thought to myself—"Ethyl for Power!" But then of course I realised it was not Ethyl's fault—he was perfectly all right. The trouble was that in the course of a very uphill journey some foreign substance had got into the pipeline—the line of communication, the source of Power to the engine which was to transmit power to the road, and the outcome was failure, disaster—just a little drop of water, that was all, but it was enough to check and make all the power inoperative.

Now no one is going to tell me that I have suggested that this Christian life is easy; in the course of this uphill journey against storm and wind and fire toward heaven, time and time again some foreign substance gets into the line of communication between the Source of all power and your own personal heart and life, and the result is that the Power of the Spirit of God for you as a Christian is rendered completely inoperative. You have received Him at your conversion, but instead of experiencing His power, something else has got into your life and taken away the source of His strength and fulness, and you are firing on very few cylinders and are making a pretty bad mess of the journey; in God's sight you are intended to be His bondslave and it is because you refuse to acknowledge that relationship that the trouble has come right in. You are His bondslaves—that is the first word.

HIS GOODS

The second word is this. This man delivered to those servants his goods. They were his goods, they did not belong to the servants, they were to be used by those servants for the enrichment of their master, for his glory and honour and name. What then are these goods? Nothing less than the whole, full mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, the outpouring of the Spirit—the Power of the Gospel to transform personality, not to submerge it, not to crush it, but to take our weaknesses and to confound the devil and to make our weak point our strong point by the Power of the Holy Spirit. He delivered unto his servants his goods and God has entrusted to everyone that hears this tremendous message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ something of the transforming Power, not as a theory, not as something we have learned in a textbook. Young people go to College to learn to study—to prepare themselves for the ministry, and they come out with heads that are just full of textbook knowledge about the Bible, but they don't know a thing of the real living experience of the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Now, you and I never have anything to offer folks today unless we have the goods of the Master. Have we got them? He delivered unto His servants His goods and He says to each one of us that we are His servants and entrusts to us His goods, this mystery of the Gospel of Christ whose reality has come to you from the moment of your conversion. The power of that gospel to transform your life, is entrusted in order that you might live for His glory and bring honour and riches to the Name of Jesus.

HIS CAPITAL

Now look into this parable a bit further and see one or two things more. See how He entrusted His capital. He gave to one servant five talents, to another two, and to another one, according to their several ability. Now you know I have heard an interpretation of this parable that suggests that the Lord Jesus Christ gave gifts to people with particular abilities, that He gave the goods to very talented and clever people, and therefore He gave to some people a bit more than others could have because they had natural gifts. That is an absolute

distortion of the truth. But, you say, He gives them according to their several ability. Yes, but the word for ability is our English word "dynamite"—"Dunamis", a quality of character of which you and I know absolutely nothing until Jesus Christ steps across the threshold of our lives and imparts it by His Spirit. "Dunamis." "I can do all things through Christ Who dynamites me." And it is through Christ alone that we have that ability. Jesus is giving us His goods not according to our educational capability, not according to something that we possess by nature, but according to our capacity to receive them. Every step of faith, every act of surrender and obedience, enlarges our capacity, our "dunamis", and therefore He is able to give more and more of His fulness, as we make room in our lives for this quality that He gives us, His very nature, His very life, this strength that is ours in an indwelling Christ. The deeper our surrender, allegiance and faith, the more we have of the Lord Jesus in His Power and fulness. The man who had one talent might easily have had five if he had had room to receive them, but he was only prepared to make room for one, and God only gave him one, but if there was an unlimited capacity there would be a greater outpouring of His goods.

Now I can illustrate this very simply and from personal experience. I received Christ as my Saviour when I was about nineteen or twenty, but I did not want to have my life interfered with too much. I wanted to be a Christian, but to have a good time and enjoy the best of both worlds. I don't know if any of you have lived on that principle, but it is a pretty miserable principle to live on. I remember some years later going to a particular place in the Midlands where I had never been before, called Peterborough, where I was to have a ten-day Mission for the Young Life Campaign. I asked a policeman if he could direct me to the address where I was staying; he looked rather surprised and said: "Surely."

I followed his instructions and found myself facing a house, garden gates and lodge, and then a drive and some trees, and way up at the other end, a mansion. Rather timidly I went up to this mansion with my little car and arrived at a very, very wonderful stately country home. I knocked on the door and the butler answered. Have you ever met butlers? They are rather important people, and this butler looked down his

nose at me, and in exactly the sort of note I expected him to use to a preacher, said:

"Are you the preacher?"

I said: "Yes." I nearly said: "Yes, sir!"

He said: "Come in," and I very obediently followed him and carried three heavy cases while he strode majestically ahead. We went up the marble stairs into a wonderful entrance hall. Then he stalked in front of me along a corridor and up some steps and along another corridor, and up some more steps until eventually we got to the back of the house, and we were on the top floor.

He said: "This is your room. You have a private bathroom and your meals are going to be sent up," and then he departed. I went out for a meeting. Next day, a Sunday, I preached in Peterborough in the morning, in the afternoon at a Cinema Service, and then in the evening in the Church again, and then afterwards at either a Cinema Service or a Squash, I forget which. I came back to that place very tired and the butler brought me my supper. I couldn't stand it any longer, and just as he was going out I said:

"Excuse me, I'd like a word with you." He wheeled round and waited, and I said, "Does anybody else live here but you and me?"

"Yes," he said, "Mrs. So-and-So."

"Well," I said, "I would very much like to meet her."

He went away and presently Mrs. So-and-So arrived, and she was what the Irish people would call rather powerful! I sort of looked at her and said:

"Good-evening," and she said: "Good-evening," and she said: "This is your room," and I nearly said "I could have told you that," and she said a few more pleasantries and talked a bit, and that was all and she went away. Do you know, until the day I went out of that house I never saw her again except to say good-morning or good-night, and when I went down that drive, my little car never quite recovered from being driven so fast! It just pelted down that drive at about thirty miles an hour!

I had two hundred miles to go to the next place, and I hadn't even time to go home and see my wife. The place I was going to was Whitchurch in Hampshire, and I had never been there before either. As I went along that road, how well do I remember my prayer: "Lord Jesus," I was asking, "I

am sure I don't hesitate to believe that you have a mansion prepared in Glory, but just right now I would like something a little less pretentious; I am happy to wait." And so we went along until we came to Whitchurch. Hampshire policemen are such lovely fellows. I asked this Hampshire policeman the way, and he looked at the address and said,

"Oh yes, you go straight through the town, and when you come to the end of the road it is there," and I thought "Oh, my!" But when I got there it was one of those delightful sixteenth or seventeenth century thatched-roofed cottages with a wonderful little rose garden in front, and as I looked at the place I was so happy and said to myself—"I know I won't be able to stand upright in any of those rooms." I knocked on the door, and a lady came and opened it and just beamed all over her face.

"Are you the preacher?" she said.

I said: "Yes."

She said, "Oh, come in, we have been looking forward to having you for so long. The whole place is yours. Make yourself at home. From the moment you are here do what you like."

You know, I could have hugged her. I didn't, but I could have done. Anyway within half-an-hour we were drying dishes in the kitchen just like home; and that night I went up and I thanked the Lord with all my heart, and I have never forgotten my happy little stay at Whitchurch.

I remember the day, when I was only nineteen, when I said, "Lord Jesus, come in, but don't interfere with my life," and I put Him—may I say this very reverently—but I am so afraid that some of you may be doing this, I put Him away up on the top floor at the back, and I said, "Now, I am going to run my own life." I did, and what a mess until I got to the end of my tether completely.

You see, if you are a young Christian you cannot possibly enjoy both worlds. The moment you are born again of God's Spirit you are spoiled for everything this world has got for you. Of course you may refuse to admit it, as I did for ten years, and got more and more miserable, but the long struggle of bitterness and misery and trying to forget about Christian things I have not time to tell you about, but I remember being in a little hall in north-west London, where someone had asked me to give a lecture on rugby football, and I arrived in the

middle of an evangelistic campaign. I am sure that was planned by the person who asked me to come. There were only about thirty people in the place and the fellow who preached was the Express Dairy milkman. He hadn't got an "h" in his vocabulary, bless him, but that young fellow with no education and little human ability had something that I knew I desperately needed. It was a very humbling thing to realise that there I was, a chartered accountant in a good job in business, playing the fool, trying to get the best out of life, indeed a real Christian in my heart, but pretending not to be, and to realise that there was a fellow who had none of the opportunities in life that God had given me, and I had wasted them all. But I remember it was just there that I said to the Lord Jesus in effect, "Come in and make Yourself at home, and take this little life and do what you like with it for now and always."

That was not a moment when I got a terrific blessing and that was the end. It was just the beginning of a new experience of the blessing of God, because that was the moment that up to the limit of my capacity then, I willingly flung the door of my heart wide open to the Lord.

How much of the Master's goods has He entrusted you with? It all depends on the amount of room you make.

HIS "WELL DONE"

Moving on quickly in our story, consider the reward that was one day to be theirs. It is worth while to live a life like this. The story tells us in verse 19 that after a long time this master returned to reckon with his servants, and you recall what had taken place meanwhile. The one to whom he had entrusted five talents had earned five more, the one to whom he had entrusted two had earned two more, and one had buried it. Look at the first two of these men. It doesn't take an accountant to tell you that both of them had earned one hundred per cent profit. Therefore the Lord said exactly the same to both of them, not a sentence, not a syllable different: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Well done"—my! isn't that worth coveting? I am old enough now not to care very much about the blame or praise of people, but I am

telling you I am getting more and more eager that somehow, by the grace of God, I might hear those words, "Well done". I don't think anything else in life matters more than that. It is a very short life journey, soon to be ended for us all, then all opportunity will be over and we shall all stand face to face with Him. I wonder what He is going to say to you and me? "Well done?"

13 Each One Reach One

I THINK it must be because personal evangelism is within the powers of everyone that it is such a popular subject both to discuss and to hear about. Only a few can preach, or go to the mission field, but everyone can speak a word of witness and those who have never done so are anxious to know how to go about it.

Personally I have a great burden on this subject and have, I am afraid, some very strong ideas about it that I try to stress at discussions and on Brains Trusts. Two main pieces of advice I give are "Don't be rude" and "Don't be crude". The Bible says "be courteous" and I consider this command broken by people who barge up to a complete stranger and say, "Are you saved?" No doubt the question springs from genuine concern, but it lacks both finesse and good manners. We can engage in personal evangelism without asking such a pointed question, and by taking some time and pains bring the subject round to a very personal issue without giving such offence. For instance, it might well be thought very rude to turn to your neighbour in the bus and say crudely, "Are you wearing wool next to the skin?" but by talking about the weather, sharing symptoms on rheumatism and a tendency to catch cold, one can very easily say, "I suffered very badly from lumbago, but personally I always wear wool next to the skin. How about you, do you find that helps?" In the same way we can talk of the terrible trend of modern affairs, juvenile crime, lack of interest in spiritual things, and then very simply give our own testimony of how we have found in Christ all that we need for salvation, and peace of mind, and then without any offence ask our fellow traveller if he or she too knows the Saviour.

I really don't think we are meant to be crude either. There are times for blaring the Gospel message through loud speakers and on sandwich boards, perhaps on the racecourse, but there are better methods in certain circumstances. I watched a very ardent Christian worker the other day employing what I can

only designate as crude tactics. He was carrying a banner with a very threatening text on it and was wearing a shirt with "Prepare to meet thy God" embroidered on the front and "the Wicked shall be turned into Hell" on the back. He did not merely stand for anyone interested to behold, but advanced on an intended victim, and blocked his progress until he reckoned the impeded pedestrian had had time to read the banner. Then his accomplice pressed a tract into the hand of this dazed person and sent him on his way, in no fit state to be helped by any personal worker. The fact that in extreme cases this form of evangelism has worked does not justify it, as no account is taken of the many that are completely put off. People have been converted because they have fallen off high buildings and the shock of falling has brought them to the Lord, but we don't make a practice of pushing people off high buildings in the hope of shocking them into salvation.

With all our tactics, persistent prayer, coupled with consistent living, and a word in season, are the right ingredients for success.

The Rev. Dick Rees recently at a discussion on personal evangelism prefaced the general discussion by telling us a few stories of a man who was a past master in the art of taking men alive for God. Dr. Watts-Ditchfield was the first Bishop of Chelmsford. He was a man with a great love for our Lord. The result was that he was always on the lookout for opportunities of pointing people to Christ. Before he was Bishop of Chelmsford he was Rector of one of the churches in Bethnal Green in the East End of London, and many interesting stories are told of him. Here are a few of them as the Rev. Dick told them to us.

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One Monday morning he was walking along one of the main streets of Bethnal Green when he stopped a workman on his way to work, and instantly the man turned to him and swore, and said, "Lumme, Governor, you lost me a bob."

The Rector said, "Well, how is that?" and then the man went on to explain, "I only arrived in Bethnal Green on Friday, and in the evening I was in the Boozer (that's the Public House), and someone there said, 'Have you spoken to our Rector yet?' I said, 'No, I've never spoken to a so-and-so parson in my life.' 'Well,' said one of them, 'I bet you a bob he speaks to you before you have been here a week.' 'No,' I

said, 'he won't speak to me'. And sure enough, sir, I've been here just over two days and you've spoken to me, and so you have lost me a bob."

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On another occasion he was calling at the house of a man who didn't know him, but when the man opened the door and saw the Rector standing there he promptly proceeded to shut it in his face, but not before Mr. Watts-Ditchfield had noticed in the corner of the man's room a squirrel in a cage. He felt sure that this was his point of contact, so he went to the Library and Natural History Museum and learned all he could about squirrels. A short while after he called on the man again. The man opened it, and was just about to shut the door in the Rector's face when he put his foot out, and through the half-open door this conversation went on.

"What do you want with me? I have no use for religion."

"I really have called to talk to you about your squirrels," answered the Rector.

"What do you know about squirrels?"

"I know quite a lot."

This gave him a chance to talk to the man about a subject in which he knew he was interested. He went back several times to talk about squirrels, and after a while the subject spread a little from the matter of a squirrel, and the result was that in the course of a number of months the squirrel owner was won for our Lord.

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Another story is told about him. The man at the Garage was interested only in pigeons. He called on this man one day and said to him:

"I have decided to keep pigeons at the Rectory. I have a pigeon cote already erected in the rectory garden. I wonder if you would be good enough to advise me in the purchase of some pigeons."

The man of course was highly delighted to advise the Rector about his new purchases. He went with him to the market and helped him select the birds for the pigeon cote which the Rector had erected solely with a view to winning this man for Christ. This man too, like many others, was won for the Saviour because the Rector took an interest in the things which interested him.

On another occasion he called on a Sunday afternoon at a

house which he frequently visited. He walked into the back door almost unannounced, and discovered the man of the house washing his hands over a sink.

"What do you want? You're always bothering me about religion. Can't you leave me alone?"

"Oh, come on," answered the Rector. "You oughtn't to speak to me like that today, for today is a very important occasion."

"Well, what important occasion is it?" asked the man.

"Today is the hundredth time that I have called on you to invite you to our men's class, and on ninety-nine occasions you have always given me the answer 'No'. I feel sure you will not say 'No' on the hundredth time."

"Coo", said the man, "have you called on me a hundred times? Well, if you can call on me a hundred times, then the least I can do is to come with you."

The man dried his hands, put on his jacket, and went with the rector to the men's Group. Some three or four years later the man became the Rector's Churchwarden in Bethnal Green. And all because the Rector bothered about him so very much.

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I myself should never have been won for the Lord if a schoolboy living down the road had not bothered about me. He was a little older than I was, and he kept calling at my house, "Rees, will you come to Bible Class?" I kept on giving him the answer "No", but the fellow's obvious concern for me made me decide after some thirty-six calls that I really had to go with him. His constant calling, as it were, wore down my resistance. When I went to the Bible Class I met the leader, a young medical student. This fellow obviously had something in life that I hadn't got. It was, moreover, something I wanted, and I determined to get it. After a while I discovered that the secret of this man's different kind of life was his trust in Christ. This led me to put my trust in the Lord Jesus also. I should, however, never have come to Christ if my friend down the road had not persevered with me.

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Here is another story of Bishop Watts-Ditchfield. One day he called on a woman and said to her,

"Where is your husband?"

"You can't get him today," came the answer. "You know

his work, he's a steeplejack, and if you come with me I will show him to you."

So she led the Rector to the main street, and looking up the road to the top of a nearby church she said,

"You see the spire of the church, you see the scaffolding, right up near the weathercock. You see that man who's working up there? Well, that is him. You just cannot get at him today", she concluded in some triumph.

The Rector took his departure, but can you imagine the steeplejack's horror when about half an hour later a clerical hat suddenly appeared over his scaffolding, and the hat was followed by the smiling face of the Rector.

"Whatever do you want up here?" said the man.

"I have come up here to talk to you about Christ."

"Well," said the man, "if you can risk your neck climbing my scaffolding to speak about Christ, then the least I can do is to listen to you."

So he and the Rector sat down on the scaffolding, and there, many feet above the streets of London, the rector pointed the steeplejack to Jesus Christ.

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So far I have been telling you stories of a man who was Bishop of Chelmsford some years ago. Now I am going to repeat a story that I heard the present Bishop of Chelmsford tell at a Conference of Christian people. So far as I know the person in the story was the churchwarden of one of his churches, and the story itself makes challenging reading.

Two men were in partnership together; they had been in partnership for most their lives. One was a Christian and made rather a profession of his religion, while his colleague made no Christian profession at all. After many years working together, these two men decided to retire, and on the last day when they met at their city office, the man who made no Christian profession turned to his friend,

"You know, John, I am going to miss you. We've spent the best part of our lives together, and it will be strange not seeing you again each day. There is, however, one thing I want to say to you, before we break up and dissolve our partnership, and that is this. You are the biggest hypocrite I have ever met."

"What!" answered the other. "I've never lied to you, I have never robbed you; what do you mean that I am a hypocrite?"

"Nothing like that," answered the other. "But what I mean is this. For many years now you have talked to me about your sorrows, your joys, your hopes, your fears, your money, your home, your family, your hobbies. In fact you have talked to me about everything except your Christ, your Church, your Faith, your God. And because you have never spoken to me about these things, long ago I made up my mind that John's religion was only a veneer, or something that didn't go deep. I reasoned that if your religion meant anything real to you you would at least have spoken to me about it."

I wonder what your opinion of that man's judgment is. Was his partner a hypocrite? We could excuse the man by saying that he probably felt it difficult to speak to somebody else about Christ. The fact of the matter is that we as Christian people are under orders to make our Lord known to others, and if we fail to obey what our Master orders us to do, how can we be anything other than hypocrites in our religion?

IT WAS at a Conference held here only last year that the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster was taking part in a discussion on the vexed question of Christian giving and stewardship. He maintained that the Church today was not educated into its responsibilities concerning giving, tithing and supporting the Lord's work at home and abroad. Dr. Sangster said it was not the work of the Evangelist to teach people about this subject, but the work of the Minister and Pastor. If Church members were taught their responsibilities about giving the work of the Evangelist would be much easier. He made an excellent point: "People are giving up to their convictions, but not up to their capacity."

It is quite inspiring to see the way this question of giving is tackled in the States. One of the reasons why their Churches are overflowing so that often duplicate services have to be held, where nearly every Church has a tremendous building programme for necessary expansion, why evangelistic work is so widespread and why their missionaries are so well supported, is that they have no inhibitions about finance and are taught their responsibilities.

In October last year, Tom was the speaker at a Church for their annual Pledge Day. The meetings lasted all day, during the course of which devotional and inspirational messages were given; the Church treasurer bluntly told everyone what the financial needs were for the Church for the coming year; the overheads, the minister's stipend (and that was no miserable pittance, less than the local dustman's, like it is over here), the cost of the Sunday School, their missionary commitments, and what would be needed for extension and for evangelistic efforts.

It was a formidable sum! At the end of the day all members were given a pledge card, and asked to pray in view of that, and consider what their annual income was likely to be and how much they could pledge to give to the Church

in the coming year. By the end of the day more than the necessary sum was promised.

These sums were to be given in a variety of ways, either by direct bankers' order or weekly envelope. This explained something that puzzled me in a Church I attended in Florida. The collection plate went round several rows without anyone putting anything on it. I found this rather trying when my modest little coin was left there, lonely and stark. I found that people did not give to an offering unless they had something over and above their regular giving to donate. They had already given their pledged amount, and unless they had a "first fruits," a thank offering, they did not put anything on the plate just for the look of it.

Collection plates can be very embarrassing, can't they? I remember being at a service in Watford with my mother-in-law. We were in the very front row. With piously bent head I put what I fondly thought was a half-crown in the plate, and then saw to my horror a penny lying stark and lonely. I almost upset my mother-in-law's gravity by hoarsely whispering "wrong coin" while scuffling in my handbag for the right one!

As there seems to be such a lack of teaching on this subject in the country today, we have tried to deal with it frequently during the Conference season, either in discussions or in straight talks. Some most illuminating points have been made in discussions. God has never promised that if we honour Him by giving of our substance He will do more than bless spiritually, but it has been extraordinary to hear many testifying to the fact that when they have faced up to the realisation that they have been robbing God of tithes and offerings, and have given Him His due, not only have they been blessed mightily in their souls, but they have actually prospered materially and have seen that God is no man's debtor and "them that honour Him, He will honour".

The Rev. Godfrey Robinson, Minister of Main Road Baptist Church, Romford, has been a speaker at our Conferences from the very first season, and if you want sound commonsense together with real spirituality, I know of no one who can supply this to a greater degree. When it comes to the question of Christian stewardship, Mr. Godfrey Robinson is not one to pull his punches.

On more than one occasion during the last twelve years he

has given a talk on the subject of our responsibilities in connection with the financial side of the Lord's work. Try to imagine that you are sitting in the Conference Hall along with a huge crowd of young people, and listen to Mr. Robinson speaking on "The Things that are God's".

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THINGS THAT ARE GOD'S

"Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." Words like that sound strange. (In an era of austerity we are tempted to write them off as being quite out of touch with the stern domestic necessity of making ends meet.) Pleasant and pious-sounding, yes; but realistic, emphatically no!

Yet it remains an axiom of the Christian life that the whole of a disciple's money and possessions belongs to God. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" wrote St. Paul to the Corinthian Church. A Christian is a steward who must give an account to his Master for the way in which he uses His goods.

Ignorance, however, is not the chief stumbling-block in the way of the practice of Christian stewardship. It is possible to assent to a principle in theory, yet do very little about it in practice. In the light of practical questions such as "How much, in fact, do you directly set aside for the work of the Kingdom? Do you, for example, spend more on your annual holiday than you do on your church? How does your annual contribution towards foreign missionary work compare with, say, the amount you spend on a suit or a frock?"

Let us face for a moment this fact of Christian stewardship.

I. *Its Scriptural Basis.* The Bible is our textbook and the Biblical revelation is of a God who embodies within Himself the fullest and most perfect expression of the grace of giving. "God so loved, that He gave . . ." Calvary's Cross is the measure of God's willingness to give.

The Old Testament supplies us with abundant illustrations of the exercise of this grace. Although the cattle upon a thousand hills belong to God, He condescends to use what man is willing to offer in order to further His purposes upon the earth. The Tabernacle was to be built with the willing-hearted contributions of the people of Israel. So readily did they respond to the Divine call that it was reported, "The

people bring much more than enough for the service of the work." If only a statement of that kind could be made today!

Later on, when the constituted nation had settled in the land, it became a sacred obligation for every pious Jew to pay his tithes to God.

So emphatic were the Old Testament Scriptures about this that the non-payment of tithes was regarded as robbery against God. "Will a man rob God?" cried the prophet Malachi. "But ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings." For the Divine blessing to rest upon the nation it was essential for the people to recognise their responsibility in this matter. The windows of heaven would be opened, and a blessing poured out just as soon as the tithes were brought into the storehouse. They belonged to God in the first place: to keep them back was blunt theft.

The New Testament fulfils, or "fills out," what had already been revealed in the Old. It is not right to draw a distinction between "law" in the Old Testament and "grace" in the New, in order to make the life of the Christian appear as an easy-going, do-as-you-please kind of existence with no precise and definite commitments or responsibilities. Listen to these typical New Testament phrases: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"; "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful"; "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price"; "Render . . . unto God the things that are God's". If we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ reveals the mind and the purpose of the Father, then it is plainly wrong to whittle down His statements or "spiritualise" away the challenge contained in them, until we arrive at a much lower standard than was observed even in Old Testament times.

II. *Its Systematic Observance.* The Old Testament system of tithing involved complex organisation, but it will be sufficiently accurate for our present discussion if we say that the Israelite set apart for God a tenth of his income. As modern Christians, enjoying the full light of the New Testament revelation, let us ask ourselves frankly, "What proportion of my income does in fact go directly to the work of God?" Take the case of a man who earns £300 a year. A tenth of that income shows £30 available for the work of the Kingdom at home and abroad. He may decide to give half to his own church; he still has £15 for foreign missions. Yet missionary

societies are compelled to draw our attention to the disquieting fact that the giving of many church members is considerably below £1 per head, per year.

Is it "legalist" to speak of Christian stewardship like this? Or is it facing the situation in a sane and practical manner? There are Christians who give more, far more, than a tenth of their incomes to the cause of Christ. The history of the Church gleams with shining examples of selfless devotion. Such people understandably regard references to tithing as belonging to a level of experience they have long since left behind. But if our giving be less than a tenth. . . ?

Some folk are strangely sensitive about collections and financial appeals. Admittedly some of the dreadful methods used to raise money for the Church, the body of Christ, are calculated to make angels blush. The fundamental mistake, however, with these indirect appeals, from entertainments of various kinds down to cake-guessing competitions and the more sordid forms of religiously sponsored gambling, is that they appeal to the spirit of "Get" instead of "Give". And in this the Christian is, or should be, distinct from the man of the world; he loves to give, quite apart from any apparent material gain.

There is nothing unchristian about the straightforward announcement of a need and the equally straightforward appeal for that need to be met. The apostle Paul believed in offerings, and gave instructions concerning them. He commended his beloved Philippians for their grace of giving, and cheered them with the knowledge that this would mean fruit abounding to their account.

Perhaps his classic utterance in this connection is found in 1 Corinthians XVI, v. 2: "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." St. Paul, devout Pharisee that he was, was fully acquainted with the practice of tithing. Was he thinking of systematic giving like this when he wrote those words to the Corinthian Church? "As God has prospered"—that meant much more than an odd coin in the offertory; it meant true giving, Christian giving, the kind that showed real gratitude for all that God had done in man's salvation. It meant systematic giving; week by week the obligations of being a steward of Christ had to be faced.

The percentage is not the important factor, but we do plead

for the systematic apportionment of income. This means setting aside a weekly sum for the work of one's own church, and making this contribution even if one is prevented from being at worship. Regular amounts should likewise be apportioned for missionary work and philanthropic causes. A missionary box or a definite promise made to the church missionary secretary will help one to be systematic here. The right use of money does not, of course, exclude expenditure on recreation and other personal things. But it does mean that a sense of proportion is maintained throughout and that we are not constantly embarrassed by the hymn with the lines: "Take my silver and my gold; Not a mite would I withhold." That man was at least honest who said, "When we come to that verse, I don't sing; I just hum."

III. *Its Sacrificial Nature.* We have sought to show that the practice of Christian stewardship is not an optional extra to be observed by a handful of particularly devoted saints. It is an integral part of the Christian life.

Everybody gains as soon as the principle is put into practice. It is commonplace knowledge that the work of many churches is hindered through lack of money. Allowing for the generosity of many of our members, it is nevertheless true that a revival of the practice of real Christian giving would be more than a step towards that greater revival for which so many continue to pray. Missionary societies could give themselves more freely to expansion and advance, while the maintenance of their present work would be assured. And it is a fact of personal experience, to which many would gladly testify, that the prayerful setting aside of a regular part of one's income has a boomerang effect in blessing. God is no man's debtor, and the discharge of our just obligations, so far from being a crippling burden, soon becomes a gateway into new and wonderful experiences of Divine provision.

The difficulty for so many who have never followed this practice is that of making a start. Incomes appear to be committed to the last penny, and it seems quite impossible to make further adjustments. How important it is therefore that our young people should be taught the facts of Christian stewardship as soon as they leave school and are ready to earn for themselves. Let them start right; it will be easier for them to continue. Many of our most generous subscribers to missionary causes today began this way of serving Christ, with

the encouragement of their parents, by the regular use of the missionary box.

Is it really true that we cannot re-budget our incomes? We usually manage to do what we want to do, and money is found for all kinds of other less worthy purposes. In any case, the real question is—what is the right thing to do? If it is right to begin setting aside an adequate sum regularly for God's work, then He can be trusted to look after His own children. We can share the Psalmist's confidence: "The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing."

The Christian life is a life of sacrifice. Its symbol is a Cross, on which the Son of God gave up His life for our salvation. God is not begging for our money. He Himself has provided all things needful for the maintenance of His own work, and there are adequate means within the Christian Church. But not until Christians are ready to follow their Lord in the pathway of sacrifice will those means become available.

Often we sing: "Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my life, my soul, my all." But do we really mean it? Let us be truthful here, and apply some test that will deliver us from a spurious piety. Does the love of Christ mean more to me than the amount I spend on recreation? Do I pay more for a hat, a few books, a holiday or a permanent wave than I set apart for the work of the Gospel overseas? If God loves me in the way He has demonstrated at Calvary, then it is surely my glad privilege to return that love first by the gift of myself, and then by the dedication of my possessions.

15 Thursday Night

THURSDAY night at Hildenborough is rather a special night. Just as at an evangelistic campaign the speaker is preaching for a verdict, so we feel that by Thursday night the general impact of the whole Conference should be requiring some kind of response from the young people who are there. Many come to the Conference just nominal Christians, many come who are completely carnal Christians, who are only too glad to live for themselves, to have their souls saved, but insist upon living their own lives in their own way. And so on Thursday night we try to bring people to a point where they are faced with the challenge of giving Christ not only part of themselves, but giving Him the whole of their lives.

On Thursday nights this service is often taken by the Guest Speaker, or Tom himself speaks. It is a wonderful meeting. The inevitable opposition of the first day or two has died down, and many have received so much spiritual food and instruction, they are already saying, perhaps almost unconsciously, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits."

Come with us now, and listen while Tom brings the Conference a message on consecration:

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You can read the thrilling story of St. Paul's Mission to Ephesus in Acts XIX. As the Ephesians listened to the Gospel they trusted in Christ, and as they trusted in Christ they received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And now as St. Paul writes to his converts in Ephesus he reminds them of this fact:

> Christ in Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. Ephesians I, 13.

In British Columbia recently I watched the lumbermen at work. Each log is stamped with the owner's trademark which

is the seal or mark of possession. The Lord seals as eternally His those who believe on Him, by giving them the promised Holy Spirit.

> Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Romans VIII, 9.

If you are a real Christian, and you wish to make a success of the Christian life, you must understand this clearly, that whether you are weak or strong, young or old, in Christ, your body, yes, *your body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

> What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1 Corinthians VI, 19.

Having made this clear, I want to draw your attention to an important sentence in the fifth chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

> And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. Ephesians V, 18.

Notice that this command of God, given to us through the pen of St. Paul, is first negative—something that you must not do, "Be not drunk with wine", and secondly positive—something that you must do, "Be filled with the Spirit". We might almost describe this verse as a study in black and white, for in it St. Paul describes the depths of human degradation "drunk with wine" and the highest pinnacle of Christian experience, "filled with the Spirit". This is no mere suggestion for Christian living, nor is it a word of exhortation. It is a strong, clear command. Negative—"don't be drunk"—and positive—"be filled with God's Spirit". If is it wrong for a Christian to be drunk, it is also wrong for a Christian not to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Paul is not here contrasting drunkenness with sobriety, but rather he is describing two kinds of intoxication—drunk with wine and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The drunk man hands himself over—all he is and all he has—to the alcohol which controls his desires, his thoughts, his words, his actions, and dominates his life. The Christian must never do this, but on the other hand he must hand himself over completely to the Holy Spirit, so that the third Person of the Trinity controls his desires, his thoughts, his words, his actions, and dominates his life.

Remember, the Holy Spirit is not merely a mystical Power, but a living, loving intelligent Person. The Holy Spirit is not a Power that I can have and use. He is a Person who desires to have and use me.

In this verse the Apostle is not exhorting his readers to receive the Holy Spirit. This they did many years before, when he was preaching in their midst, but now he is exhorting them to be filled with the Spirit, for it is one thing for you to have the Holy Spirit, but an entirely different matter for Him to have you. It is one thing to receive the Spirit, but quite a different matter to be filled with the Spirit. He may be resident in your life without being President in your life.

Morning and evening throughout this week you have been listening attentively to the Word of God through our Guest Speaker, and through the discussions, but now as the week draws to a close on this Thursday evening I want to challenge every one of you personally. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? I am not speaking about an ecstatic emotional experience, but of something that touches life in a practical way at every angle, something that brings harmony and contentment into your own soul:

> Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians V, 19, 20.

Something that brings harmony into the home between husband and wife, and parents and children, and harmony into everyday life between employee and employer:

> Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. . . . Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it. . . . Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. . . . And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will

of God from the heart. Ephesians V, 21, 22, 25; VI, 1, 4, 5, 6.

And now I want to suggest four reasons why we as Christians should seek the fulness of God's Spirit.

First and foremost I would like to suggest that we should seek the fulness of the Holy Spirit in order that God Himself may be glorified. Let this always be our first and dominating motive in seeking any spiritual blessing from God. God will never bless me merely to give me more joy and peace for myself, nor will He bless me merely that my Christian service may become more successful. My motive in seeking to enter the deeper life should be the Glory of God.

In the second place, we should seek God's fulness so that Christ might be magnified in us and through us. This was the great desire of the heart of St. Paul:

As always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. Philippians I, 20.

Did you ever play with a magnifying glass when you were a youngster? Provided the glass is clean and well ground it does not draw attention to itself, but only magnifies, makes large and visible, the object that you are studying. We should seek the fulness of God's Spirit, not that we might be magnified, but that Christ might be magnified in us and through us. With John the Baptist we must say:

He must increase, but I must decrease.—John III, 30.

There is a lovely chorus that we used to sing years ago which ought to be the constant prayer of every child of God:

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wondrous compassion and purity,
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.

In the third place, let me suggest that we should seek the fulness of God's Spirit for the blessing of our friends and acquaintances, that sinners might be justified and saints edified. There are many people amongst your friends and acquaintances, folk in your home, your place of business and your Church, who will never be won for Christ by the preaching of any Minister or Evangelist, who will never be converted through any Campaign or Conference. Their only hope, humanly

speaking, is that of seeing Christ and meeting Christ in and through you. Salvation is not given to us as a privilege, it is entrusted to us as a solemn responsibility. The reason why we are so anxious that all Christian persons in conference this week should yield themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is that they in turn may go away to be a blessing to other folk. The reason why some folk are completely stale in their spiritual experience is because they are not sharing with others the good things they receive from God.

Look at a map of Palestine. There you will see two Inland Waters, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Galilee is teeming with life within and without, while the Dead Sea is all that the name implies. Nothing can live in it or near it, and yet these two Seas are both fed by the same River Jordan. The reason for the contrast, of course, is obvious. The Jordan flows both into the Sea of Galilee and out of the Sea of Galilee, but when it reaches the Dead Sea there is no way out, the water can only evaporate and stagnate. What is your life? A Sea of Galilee or a Dead Sea?

> There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Proverbs XI, 24.

There are two lovely promises given by the Master and recorded in John, chapters IV and VII. The promise in chapter IV speaks of receiving the living water:

> Jesus said, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John IV, 13, 14.

While the promise in chapter VII speaks of giving the living water:

> If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. John VII, 37b, 38.

One girl prayed a beautiful prayer: "Oh God, I can't hold much, but I could overflow a lot."

Yes, we should seek the fulness of God's Spirit, first that God might be glorified, secondly that Christ might be magnified, and thirdly that others might be edified.

Now finally I want to suggest that we should seek His fulness that the Devil might be terrified.

A General who was in charge of an important sector of the battlefield wired back each day his report, "All is quiet at the Front." After some weeks he received a severe reprimand from Headquarters. "Sir, you are reminded that you are not sent to keep peace, but to drive the enemy back."

I once heard someone give the following Benediction:

"May the Lord bless you and make you a nuisance to the Devil."

I want to make this abundantly clear, that the powers of darkness will never be disturbed by either our organisation, our feverish activity, or our much preaching and speaking, but the Devil will be profoundly disturbed by holy Christlike living which must result from the Spirit-filled life.

And so tonight I challenge you to dedicate your life in its entirety to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As you give more of yourself to Him, He will give more of Himself to you by His Spirit. I am not asking you to seek an emotional experience, but to enter into a closer life of fellowship with Jesus Christ, that from henceforth the Holy Spirit may fill your life and control you in thought, word and deed.

> And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;
> but be filled with the Spirit.

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After this meeting Tom invites all who want to give their lives wholly to Christ, not only for salvation but for full consecration, to go at 10 o'clock to the Old Parish Church.

I must tell you about this old church before we go any further. Ever since 1300 there has been a little parish church in Frinton, and one of the great attractions to us when we came from Kent was the fact that this ancient building was practically on our premises, and that through the kindness of the Rector we could not only have the use of it for Prayer Meetings, but it was available for private prayer at any time. This church, the smallest in Essex, and one of the smallest Parish Churches in England, used to be quite adequate for the congregation, when one remembers that until 1860 Frinton consisted of four houses, four cottages and twenty people. But early in the new century the population rose as follows:

1901 — 64
1911 — 1,500
1934 — 2,200
1955 — 2,800

and so it continues until this day. In 1929 a new Parish Church was built, leaving this little one as a "chapel of ease", and it is a wonderful place in which to hold our early morning prayer meetings.

Through the kindness of our guests the whole place has been refurnished, as there were only pews for a very few when we came, and electric light and heating have been installed.

It is wonderful how many guests draw away from the holiday atmosphere and go into that little church and kneel to pray. I have often felt quite overwhelmed when I have been kneeling there, coming straight from the everyday round, to realise that people have been praying in this little church for hundreds of years. Right through the days of the Wars of the Roses people prayed there, through the days of the turbulent Tudors, through the ups and downs of the Reformation. One of the first chained Bibles must have been put in that little church in the year 1538. Then through the days of the vacillating Stuarts, when Essex must have been untouched by much of the turmoil that went on, and through Commonwealth days, when England's greatness at home and abroad rose to a peak, in that reign of righteousness; then back again to the gay restoration days, through the days of Queen Anne, and then the German Georges; through the long reign of Queen Victoria the good, and then in the early part of the twentieth century when Frinton became better known and maybe more people attended Church.

The old Visitors' Book of the Esplanade Hotel recalls many great names, many barons and baronesses from the Continent, who came and stayed there. I wonder if they attended the little church.

And now tonight, on this Thursday night, many young lives will be dedicated here to the Lord for His service. It is quite quiet in the Old Church yard, and it seems a contrast to the gay day of laughter, even to the happy singing of the earlier session, when very quietly, one by one, people make their way to the little church. Thirty, sixty, seventy, eighty, sometimes perhaps even more are packed into that small building, when

Tom takes a most impressive Service, not lasting very long, but giving those present time to count the cost of what it means to follow the Lord wholly, realising where it may lead, and giving themselves completely to Him, not only relying on this as a one-time crisis, but realising that it will need a daily renewal in the years to come.

Spiritual history must have been made in that little church week by week, and the results of decisions there will be felt in the far corners of the earth. Numbers of those who have dedicated their lives have gone to the mission field—we hear from quite a number of them. Many have entered into full-time training, but not only that, hundreds of people as a result of that decision are quietly living Christ-like lives, and have become "living epistles to be seen and read of all men", so that homes are being changed, and Christ is being uplifted and glorified in places of business, offices, churches, hospitals, and schools by ordinary people who have made an extraordinary decision.

ONE thing we ban at Hildenborough is "buttonholing", putting someone on the spot, wagging a threatening finger and saying, "Are you saved?" Neither the staff nor guests are allowed to embarrass people like this. But don't misunderstand me, it doesn't mean we are not all vitally interested in the spiritual state of those who come; but they are here for a week, and the Holy Spirit through the speaker makes the impact, and to rush in, in the energy of the flesh, may produce premature spiritual births and actually hinder the work altogether. We are all ready, eager to talk when the time comes. The Lord speaks day by day to some, gradually overwhelming them with a sense of their need and the greatness of His Salvation.

To some people the Lord seems to speak increasingly as the week goes by. Such was the case with the Principal of a large college who came to us last year. His son and daughter were converted, so was their Mother, and they were a very happy family, but they thought, if only they could get Father to come to a Conference, he too would become a Christian. He was a nominal Christian, he sometimes read the lessons in the Church, but they knew, and he knew, this was only an outward thing. So they did something that we never consider a wise plan. They invited him to come to Hildenborough, and did not tell him what he was coming to. We ourselves do not advocate this at all. We think it much better for people to know what they are in for, and then they are prepared, but to invite a person to come, and let him think he is only coming to an hotel, and then burst the Conference on him on arrival, is hardly fair to him or to us. But in this case it did not seem to have too detrimental an effect. Father had been told he was going to stay at a nice hotel on the East Coast. "It is a very good hotel," they said, "but not so expensive as most ordinary hotels." That was the only difference that had been broken to him. So Father was somewhat shaken on arrival to find that there were meetings each day, but he thought, "Let the family

go and I'll get a deck chair on the beach and be quite happy". But when he attended the opening session Tom told them: "Of course you all know that this is a Conference Centre, and that you have agreed to attend the two sessions each day." What a blow for Father! But he was the Principal of a Technical College with two thousand students under him, and he knew that if there was a rule about a thing, the rule had to be obeyed, and so if there was a rule that guests had to attend the sessions, then he was for it, and he went along.

He described to us how each day the Lord seemed to say something new to him. One day at the morning session the Lord said, "Charles, you have got to humble yourself," and he thought, Fancy God knowing my Christian name! He was most surprised, because God spoke to him as definitely as that. It was not until the Thursday that he realised to the full what conversion meant, and after a long interview with Tom, when he was greatly moved, he committed himself fully to Christ, and you can well imagine there were great rejoicings in that family.

Some people come to a Conference knowing full well what they are coming to, but determined not to be influenced.

I remember a huge young man called Eddy, a champion boxer, coming for a week. He had been persuaded to come by a girl of whom he was very fond, but he was determined not to get converted. He was so proud of himself at the end of the week when, as he put it, he'd stood up to God for seven rounds without a knock-out. But that came later. At a simple evangelistic meeting God met him, and he went down for the count. He was transformed. It was a great sight to see him one night in the Royal Albert Hall, where before he had fought successfully to defend a boxing title, giving his testimony. The only thing that remained to show his former occupation very obviously was that he emphasised each point with a forceful left, as if getting the Enemy on the chin!

Since I wrote this about Eddy, I have heard from a mutual friend that he and the Christian girl who persuaded him to come to a Conference have been married, and they have a Christian home and are serving the Lord together.

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There is something much "stranger than fiction" about the complete change that can take place in anyone during a Conference. Quite frankly, if I put in a story some of the transformations that I have seen happen to people, readers would

say, "I think that a little overdrawn, it could only happen in a story", but truth is stranger than fiction. For instance, I think of a girl who only a month ago was a convinced atheist. I don't just mean an agnostic, who doesn't know if there is a God. But Joan was convinced there was no God. Her father had taught both his daughters that this was so. The older daughter, Betty, broke away from family tradition, and had become a Christian. She had a good job, but Joan was a University student, and a holiday was a bit of a problem for her. However, Betty offered to pay for her to have a week at Frinton. Joan was enthusiastic until she read the prospectus. A *Christian* place! Couldn't she go somewhere else? But when she found it was that or nothing, she agreed to endure the Christianity for the sake of a holiday. The first we knew of all this was when Joan came to see Tom in his study.

"I suppose you know I'm an atheist?" she said, sitting back to see the effect. Tom politely said:

"Is that so?"

"Aren't you going to convert me?" asked Joan.

"No," said Tom, "if you are quite content to be an atheist, I'm not going to attempt to convert you."

"But aren't you going to argue with me?" she asked.

"No," said Tom, "I don't waste my time arguing."

"You can't convince me there's a God," she said defiantly.

"No, Joan," Tom replied, "I can't, and what's more, I'm not going to try. If you are quite happy to remain an atheist, then there's nothing God or I can do about it."

There was a long pause, then in an entirely different voice Joan said:

"But that's just it. I'm *not content*. I don't want to be an atheist! What I've heard this week makes me wish I could believe in God."

Tom said: "Well, that's quite different. Now we can talk." And for a long time he talked and she listened and asked questions. It was a tough fight and a big change for her to make. In the end Tom left her to pray over it alone.

"You are an intelligent person," he said, "and you must arrive at a decision to believe in God without any pressure on my part. I'm going to leave you to pray it over with Him."

An hour later Tom was greeting the guests as they came into the dining room for dinner. Joan was the last to come in; with a radiant face she said:

"Mr. Rees, I want to thank you for helping me to find God. I believe it, it's true, and I have asked Christ to be my Saviour."

Betty, her sister, was electrified to get a phone call asking if funds would run to another week, as, Joan told her, she had become a Christian, but there was so much she wanted to learn. Needless to say, Betty rose to the occasion. How she must have thanked God for answered prayer.

In a letter a few days ago Joan said:

"It is the most wonderful thing in the world to know that past sins are forgiven when we lay them at the foot of the Cross—I did so long for forgiveness—it fills me with wonder that the Lord died for me, in fact it's one of the things I can hardly think of, it is too wonderful to bear. I only pray that as I grow in faith the Lord will show me how to become more worthy of the name of Christian."

Only last week a girl paid a return visit to us, having come to her first Conference a few months ago. That first Conference was her last bulwark before entering a Convent.

"If I do not find what I want here," she decided, "then when I return I will run away from home and enter a Convent." It was not that her family was Roman Catholic, but she had been sent to a Convent School and her desire for something, that spiritual "something" that her parents had never supplied, or shown any interest in, had made her decide to become a nun. Her parents, though completely irreligious, forbade this, whereupon she decided to wait until she was twenty-one. But, as so often happens, the Lord brought a Christian girl across her path, who told her it was Christ she needed and not a convent life, and urged her to come to a Conference at Hildenborough.

This girl, in her desire to find satisfaction, had started attending a very High Anglican Church and had been christened, confirmed and received her first communion, but none of these outward and visible signs meant anything to her, for she knew nothing of the inward and spiritual grace of redemption in Christ.

So she decided to come to Hildenborough to see if she could find here what her heart longed for. If not, then she would take the law into her own hands and at nineteen run away to a Convent. She used her brain as well as her heart and listened to the sessions with notebook and pencil, and she came to see Tom armed with questions. She wanted to learn—and her

list of questions was long—at each point she knew what the Roman Catholics taught, "The Protestants I've talked to have no answer; what do you say?"

Tom used the Bible to answer her problems, which included confession, purgatory, prayer to the saints, and the most vital question of all:

"Protestants say that the death and resurrection of Christ alone is enough to atone for my sin and bring me forgiveness, but the Roman Catholics say it is the death of Christ, plus our prayers and penances. What do you say?"

It was a lovely question from someone needing to be introduced to the Saviour. Tom showed her from the Bible that night how Christ alone could save, and she put her trust in Him.

And a week or so ago she was back. It worked! She was satisfied, and happy. She told the Conference in a discussion that the greatest blessing she had received in the three months since her conversion was from learning John's First Epistle off by heart.

"It gave me all the assurance I needed. 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,'" she quoted triumphantly. "No penances and prayers; and then later it says, 'We know we have eternal life'—no uncertainty of purgatory, but knowing *now*." She went on to quote many verses.

Such encouragements as this happen thick and fast during the season.

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Friday is a grand day at Hildenborough, overshadowed only by the fact that tomorrow is Saturday and the holiday will come to an end, but on Friday the Conference seems to reach its peak in many ways.

It's wonderful how well you can get to know people in a week. Seven days isn't long, but you can learn a great deal in that time, which reminds me of a man I met in Florida. He told me his daughter was coming to Europe for a tour, and on her schedule (pronounced with a "k") she was visiting fifteen countries, seeing "just everything". Of the aforementioned schedule only three days had been allotted for Great Britain, which he personally didn't feel was enough, so he had arranged for her to spend seven days over here, so that she could get a complete grasp of English literature! Now, I don't claim that our guests get a complete grasp of revealed truth in a week, but they learn a lot and have a packed programme.

Many people have got to know each other so well, in fact, that they are spending the rest of their lives together, which is a very useful by-product of a Christian Conference Centre. After all, how much better for young couples to meet under Christian auspices than to meet at a dance, or in some entirely secular surroundings. You have only to look through our card index system to see how many houses, bungalows, cottages and villas are named "Hildenborough" to realise that something quite permanent happened on that week's holiday at Hildenborough.

But I think it is the spiritual impact that makes Friday what it is. Each day the Guest Speakers have a time for interviews. A delightful little room, known as the Oak Room, is given over to the Guest Speaker for this purpose.

As it gets towards the end of the week his time is very fully occupied. It not only keeps the Guest Speaker himself occupied, but Tom and I and others helping are all engaged in talking problems over with the hundreds of people who come. At a Teenagers' Conference particularly there seem to be a number of problems. Some are quite simple; I find that so many young people are worried about their spiritual state simply because they are suffering from spiritual malnutrition. My conversation with a girl called Mary is typical of many:

"I don't seem to be making any progress in my Christian life," says Mary.

"How are you getting on with your prayer and Bible reading?" I ask.

"Oh, I haven't read my Bible for months," she says. "I don't seem to be able to get anywhere with it."

"Now, what would your doctor say," I ask her, "if you went to him and said, 'I am not feeling at all well, I'm a little bit weak, I haven't had anything to eat for a month?' "

The point goes home to her, and she realises that the cause of lack of victory in her life is that the army is not marching on its stomach!

Some want guidance about their future careers. Quite a number seek guidance concerning living the Christian life consistently at home. Some have very difficult problems. A teenager had recently become a Christian, and her mother, widow of an army officer, is living with another man, but will not marry him or she will lose her pension. Should the daughter stay at home and condone this. If she does do so

and is unpleasant to the man, it seems unchristian, and her mother tells her so; or ought she to leave home? What is right as a Christian?

Another girl with whom I had a talk told me that her father, who had been terribly opposed to her Christianity, had decided to give her a party for her twenty-first birthday on Easter Sunday. As he put it, there would be plenty of drink, and so they could spend all Monday sleeping it off! He was to invite a number of his friends, and she was to invite hers. Now she had already told him that she didn't want a party of that sort, but he had said that if she wouldn't come to the party, then she could leave home the very next day. This would mean leaving her mother, whom she was trying to help; on the other hand, if she went to the party he would always have a handle against her. "You were glad enough to have that party I gave you on your twenty-first birthday," he would say; "you were quite willing to come to that and invite your friends." Now, what was she to do as a Christian?

There are many people on the verge of nervous breakdowns. They often feel this is some lack in them spiritually, whereas often all they need is a nerve tonic and a good rest. On the other hand, there is sometimes some faulty teaching concerning the Holy Spirit that is worrying them, or something that is being held back and is causing some kind of neurosis. It is, of course, a thrill when numbers of people come to us for a talk, and you find that what they really want to do is to commit their lives to Christ.

I remember one person, not just a teenager by any means, but someone much older, who came to see me quite early in the week and said: "I have got to talk to you. I came to Hildenborough with the express purpose of getting right with God, and I want to know what I can do about it now."

Yes, Friday is a day when everything seems to come to a head. Of course there is a great deal of activity going on. Sometimes we have sports, always some beach game of crocker, podex, or a bathing party.

Hilarity reaches its peak on Friday night at dinner time. I often think it would be rather fun to have a recording of the sound on Saturday night at dinner time, when the guests first arrive, and then by way of contrast have a recording of the conversation at Friday night's dinner seven days later.

On Saturday night everything is very quiet and polite. In

hushed tones everyone is asking, "Where do you come from?" "What is your name?" but by Friday night everyone knows everyone else tremendously well, and the conversation just hits the roof.

An unfortunate tradition seems to have been started that each Friday Tom and I should sing a song about a Baby who, owing to its undernourished condition, unfortunately slipped down the plug-hole. However, we try to forget this and avoid it, but there is almost bound to be the shout for this song, and Tom and I have to sing our famous duet. That poor baby must have gone down the plug-hole literally hundreds of times!

There are always a number of funny stories to be told. I was interested to find in the States that just as we have a tradition over here that it is the Scotsman, particularly the Aberdonian, who cannot see the joke, over there it is the Englishman who always misses the point.

Tom has a story, of the slightly "shaggie dog" variety, that goes down very well on either side of the Atlantic. This is about an Englishman with a very "Bertie Wooster" voice who is visiting the States for the first time. He goes into a Subway, and as the train jerks he lands on a lady's lap. He says:

"Oh I say, I'm frightfully sorry and all that, but I'm not used to these trains. I've just arrived—I'm an Englishman."

To which she replied:

"Say, I thought at first you were a Laplander."

The delighted Englishman stored this up to tell at his welcome-home dinner:

"Such a wonderful sense of humour, you know, those people over there have. I was in the Subway—as they call the Underground—and I fell into a lady's lap. I said: 'I'm so sorry, I'm an Englishman,' and d'you know what she said? Frightfully funny, I thought. She said: 'Oh, really? I thought you were an Eskimo!'"

I know from experience that they really do think our sense of humour is limited. I was at a meeting in one of the Southern States where the Minister was announcing the Ladies' Missionary Sewing Meeting.

"Will all ladies please bring their own needles and scissors?" he said, adding: "Now you do see the point, don't you?" And under cover of the laughter a very kind lady whispered to me:

"You see, he means the point of what he says, not just the

point of the scissors. I thought I'd tell you, as I know you Britishers don't see a joke easily."

On Fridays we generally have a shout for the cooks to come in to give the guests an opportunity of thanking them for their help. There are prizes to give away for the week's sporting activities, and of course everyone sitting eating their roast chicken, with stuffing and sausage, feels in a very mellowed mood.

Friday night sessions are different from any other. Whereas there have been discussions and talks, on Friday night the session is given over to the guests themselves. It is their opportunity to share with others what they have learnt during the week at Hildenborough. It is not an opportunity for them to get up and make a long speech, nor an opportunity for them to indulge in a great deal of ancient history. All they are asked is to tell us what they have learnt during the one week at Hildenborough, what the Lord has taught them, anything new that they have discovered. It may be something they have decided to go home and do as a result of the Conference. They have been very thrilling evenings, those Friday nights, looking out over the faces of the Conference; it is astonishing what can happen in one short week.

On the first night one can almost sense on some faces hostility, the determination not to be one of the crowd and not to laugh, not to be drawn into what's going on. And what a thrill it is on that following Friday to hear that person who had the hard and hostile face standing up and telling us: "During this week I have found the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour."

There are such a wide variety of things that people have learnt. Many have got a taste for Bible Study, and are longing to get down to it. And a very large number have learnt for the first time to pray and have a Quiet Time. Some have felt the responsibility of winning others for Christ. It is quite interesting to note throughout it all that although people have had a grand week's holiday, they often say, "but I am just longing to get back, because there is so much I have to do."

People learn quite surprising things at Hildenborough.

I remember one young man from Lancashire getting up and telling us:

"The thing I've learnt this week at Hildenborough is how to press my trousers. It seems you put them under your

mattress overnight, and in the morning there is a lovely crease down the front!"

Another right-up-to-the-minute miracle happened this last week. A young married woman had been brought by two friends. Until two months before, her husband had been a hopeless drunkard. Not only did he spend all their money, but he actually physically ill-treated his wife and terrified his child. But the miraculous happened and at an evangelistic meeting he was converted. Telling us the story the young wife said, "Although I was glad about the change in him, it seemed to make a bigger barrier between us than ever. I couldn't understand about how to become a Christian, so he persuaded me to come here for a holiday. Last night," she said, "I asked the Lord Jesus to be my Saviour." Then she added with shining eyes, "I just can't wait to get home to see my husband's face."

The very fact of putting into words what people have learnt seems to crystalise the experience for them. A great many of the staff who work behind the scenes, and are not able to attend many of the sessions, make a point of coming on the Friday night. I don't know how many times we have said to each other, when on the Friday night we are feeling, quite naturally, a little physically exhausted:

"Isn't the work tremendously worthwhile."

One Friday night recently, when one after another of the young people at a Teenagers' Conference told us they had accepted Christ for the first time, we discovered that no less than forty had been converted during that one week.

17 Bring the Family

SINCE coming to Frinton we have been able to institute Family Conferences, and for the four weeks of June we have welcomed guests with their children. During these weeks we really "go to town" on doing all we can to make it easy for parents with families to have a good holiday. People often ask why we couldn't have children all the time, but we have to remind them that we are a *conference* centre and that our object is not holidays, but conferences. We are not just a hotel or holiday camp, but we do want to invest our time to the very best advantage spiritually, and we find it easier for people to concentrate on the conferences when they are unhampered by children. But during June we have had some wonderful times with the families. In Kent we were unable to have children and it meant that so many of our young couples were not able to visit us. We try to think of everything we can that will be a help. We have drying rooms in both houses, electric rings with milk provided, saucepans, special children's teas at five o'clock where ice cream, jellies, cereals, cakes, buns, and everything dear to the heart of a child is provided. We have baby sitters and baby listeners so the parents can attend sessions; we have people staying with us who will take the children off the parents' hands and allow them to get some time together. I feel it is particularly important that young couples should get time together, and that having children should not spoil their enjoyment of each other's company, but this so often happens, and as soon as the children come along the parents, instead of becoming personalities to each other, become "daddy" and "mummy" and only that. "What God has joined let not children put asunder!"

I want to tell you about a young couple who were with us this summer. This is the story in Betty's own words.

"The first time I ever sensed that I had a soul," she said, "was in 1951 when my husband, Ernest, had a very bad accident, and

as a result fractured his skull and he had to be at home from work for about seven months. I wondered why this should happen to me. It must be God telling me I have sinned, and I supposed I ought to go to Church, which I did about once a month, but it seemed I never got any further, except I learnt that I should love the Lord my God with all my heart and mind, and as best as I could I attempted this, but after a few days I realised how impossible it was. It was very difficult at home. I had to go out to work, and Ernest very much resented my being the breadwinner, and so I turned to all the world could offer to me in the way of entertainment, but even yet I can remember how disappointed I was, and every time I returned home I was more depressed than ever. Then came a day when I had arranged with a friend to go to a Royal Albert Hall rally, and I was glad to have an evening out, and very much enjoyed singing the choruses that I knew well from Sunday School days, until we sang, 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus'. The first time I sang it heartily and then Mr. Rees said, 'Now we will sing it again and think of the words', and I did, I turned my eyes upon Jesus and realised how much I needed Him, and saw myself for what I was, so that for the rest of the evening I heard no more but was just thinking of Him, and realised I could find no peace until I knew how I could become a Christian, and so very wonderfully at the close of the service Mr. Rees told us just how 'him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out'. So I came. The next day seemed utter bliss and I thought, This will never last. You've tried before; it will never last. A few evenings later a friend of Ernest came to see him and noticed a Bible on the shelf and said, 'What's that doing there?' so I told him how I had come to commit my life to the Lord Jesus. He seemed most surprised. Most of this time Ernest was being very silent about the change in my life, except to keep on remarking, 'This will pass, you can't keep this up'. He told me he didn't mind my going to church, if I let him go out as often as he liked to different clubs singing. He was quite a singer, was Ernest. He was in great demand as a crooner with dance bands. All this time I realised he just *had* to come to know the Lord Jesus. Things could not go on as they were, so I prayed that he would be saved.

"Then I thought, if only I could get him to go to Hildenborough. So straight away I booked a week in September. Then I told him, and he said, 'Well, you can just unbook it, because I am not going to go to Hildenborough to get converted.' He added, 'I am all right as I am, thank you very much.' But I prayed on and I got a few friends to pray also, leaving it until the last week before we were due to go. I told Ernest the booking still stood. He was very annoyed, but said he would go, though

it was the last thing he would ever do to please me. To me it didn't matter, the Lord was going to do the rest: I just had to get him there. The last thing Ernest's friends at work said to him was, 'Don't let them convert you, Ernie'; to which he replied, 'Don't you worry, it will be the other way round.'

"The first few days at Hildenborough were the most miserable of his life. He only went to the sessions because he had to, and he would hardly speak to a soul. What annoyed him most of all was that he had expected people to keep coming to him to talk to him about being saved, and he was just longing for an opportunity for an argument. But of course nobody did. They were all just kind and smiled at him, and nobody said anything, to his great annoyance. On the Tuesday morning Ernest went for a walk to the shops for some cigarettes, and I went to my room to pray over what seemed to be an impossible situation. It was while he was walking that he was convicted by the Lord, and before he knew it he had walked back to the house to speak to Stephen Olford, who was the speaker. While talking to Mr. Olford, Ernest was really broken down with conviction of sin, and accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. We can't remember what we said to each other that night, we only know we sobbed ourselves to sleep with joy in the knowledge of such a loving Saviour as our Lord Jesus. On returning home it was a somewhat nervous Ernest who went to work on Monday morning.

"He knew what to expect from his friends, and sure enough as soon as he got to work bright and early, the first one came straight to him and said, 'Well Ernie, did they go and convert you?' To which Ernest replied, with much fear and trembling, 'I received the Lord Jesus as my Saviour.' They said, 'You're kidding, Ernie, anyone else we would believe it of, but not you.' Then Ernest said, 'I have never been more serious in my life.'

"During the rest of the day there was a continuous stream of fellows coming to Ernest asking him, but none of them believing it was true. At the end of the day they all came round him and said, 'All right, Ernie, the joke is on us, now tell us the truth, what did happen on your holiday?' So just repeating again his testimony, Ernest told them as best he could what had happened.

"Ernest has left there now, but due to his witness two others have since come to know the Lord Jesus Christ who worked with him there. It was a great joy to us when Ernest began to get opportunities of giving his testimony and of singing for the Lord at meetings at our Church.

"Not very long after we moved to Finchley we were most definitely guided by the Lord in this. It was our desire from the beginning that everyone in the road should know whom we served and that we were willing to share our knowledge of the Lord

Jesus with them, so we visited every house where we knew there were young people, and invited them to come to our house for a squash, where Ernest and I gave our testimonies and a friend of ours preached the gospel. The Lord has blessed us very richly with Christian friends, and a number of those we have contacted have since come to know the Lord Jesus, for themselves.

"Our two children, Susan and David, are a great joy to us and it is a great responsibility to teach them and train them in the way of the Lord. We pray that by our example they may grow up with a desire to know the Lord Jesus in a personal way, and so together we press forward for the prize of the high calling that is in the Lord Jesus."

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It is surprising how many of those who come to our Family Conferences are comparatively newly converted. There was a couple this year who had both been converted through a talk with the vicar on the occasion of the baptism of their child, only a few months previously. We try to have a session at these Conferences for parents where we can discuss questions such as children's training, children's prayers, and our own family responsibilities.

What impresses me is how very domesticated and family minded modern fathers are. At a family conference I have never seen so many fathers who can cope with children and babies, whatever the age, and give the tired mothers some help.

My father had seven children, but it wasn't until I made him a grandfather that he ever pushed a pram. This he celebrated by pushing grandchild No. 1 the length of The Spaniards Road, Hampstead. (He has twenty grandchildren now, and I don't think he's done it since!)

This story might have been told of one of our Hildenborough guests, having benefited from a family discussion.

Small child having breakfast with no enthusiasm, father says: "Come on, John, eat up your lovely porridge—and stop throwing the beastly stuff over me!"

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Once a year we have what we call our Homemakers' Conference. This is a Conference for which I am responsible, and it is really for women only, and when sometimes a few husbands come unawares we call them homebreakers! We have a speaker who gives us a devotional talk each morning,

and then we have question time, when every imaginable question is discussed, from children's prayers, children's careers, how to make the most of our homes in hospitality, to running squashes and drawing-room meetings. Then in the evening we have a talk or an address. On one or two occasions I have given a talk on the Christian wife. I am fairly safe in doing this because usually this Conference is held in October, and my husband is several thousand miles away, and I urge the staff to absent themselves. I remember when the children were small and we held these Conferences, I used to implore them if they were going to behave badly to wait until the Conference was over. Nothing can be more humiliating to the leader of a Conference in describing how children should be brought up if her own children should be heard making a hideous exhibition of themselves. However, they were always most co-operative and agreed to postpone any wickedness until Friday. In talking about the Christian wife I must have used some very telling advice on the subject of how to get your own way with your husband.

I was in Devonshire with Tom, having a walk down one of the lanes, when I met a couple coming towards us. They greeted us warmly and the lady of the party said, "I was at your Homemakers' Conference"; and then she somewhat belligerently tackled me.

"Do you remember," she said, "Mrs. Rees, in your talk about the Christian wife telling us how to get our own way with our husbands without nagging? Well," she said, "it's two years ago and I still haven't got my new kitchen stove."

Her husband looked a little guilty; then she went on, "Do you remember you told us what we had to do was . . ."

I hastily stopped her and took her to one side, imploring her not to give the game away. It would be a dreadful thing if my secret tactics were thus exposed! I still wonder if she's got that stove.

At these Conferences we have a number of practical demonstrations during the afternoons. We have had visits from a Constance Spry representative, when a demonstration has been given of flower decoration. We have had handicraft demonstrations, when Mrs. Walkden has showed us how to make lampshades, and how to do felt work. I have given numerous demonstrations of sweet making and how to make meringues and cream horns, not to mention barbola work.

We usually have an exhibition, too, of our own handicrafts. Everyone brings something that she has made and puts it on exhibition, and we have all been quite aghast at each other's cleverness.

At some of these Conferences we have included sessions on women's work and on one or two occasions I have given a demonstration on "How *not* to run a women's meeting". I give a demonstration and then we discuss it and everyone tells me what was wrong. Positive instruction has its place, but I have proved that there is nothing to touch letting people see themselves as others see them, for getting the point across.

I start by saying that the Chairman should create a happy atmosphere, so I put on a voice as Mrs. Grimshaw, a very dead flat voice, and start off something like this:

"Good afternoon ladies, I am glad that so many of you have managed to come on this awful day. There don't seem to be quite so many of you as usual. I know there is a lot of illness about and while in life we are in death, but still I think a great many more of you could come than usually do, but I don't think you make the effort. But now let's have some choruses to cheer us up."

Having demonstrated how not to create a happy atmosphere at the beginning of the meeting, I proceed to show how not to run the choruses. Mrs. Grimshaw in her flat blank voice says:

"Now who will choose a chorus? Twenty-five—yes, that a good one, now another, now another," and then with her face perfectly grim she says, "yes, 64, I'm so happy, and here's the reason why, that's a good one," and then when someone else tried to choose another chorus, she says, "No, that's quite enough, we can't waste any more time on that."

Then she goes over to Mrs. Donald to give us the prayer requests. A great many meetings have these special prayer requests.

At one meeting for which I was responsible when I was down in the West Country, there was one particular woman who was very keen on having a prayer request box. I was a little doubtful about it myself, but we had the box and the requests were all in the same handwriting; they ran like this:

"Please pray for a sister that she may be given patience to put up with a very bad-tempered husband"—in the same handwriting—"Please pray for one who has to put up with the inconsistent behaviour of one at home who calls himself a Christian but does not live up to it." This particular prayer request box died a natural death, but let's go over to Mrs. Donald and her series of prayer requests.

"I want you to pray," she says, "for those who are not with us that the Lord will keep them where they are, then I want you to pray very specially for Mrs. Jones, she doesn't like the look of her husband at all. And I want you to pray for Mrs. Brown's Johnny, she's taken him to the doctor with his face, he's had it a long time and its spreading.

The awful warnings of these prayer requests are obvious and we go over to Mrs. Featherstone for the notices.

The notices, of course, should always be given out clearly so that everyone can understand all that is being said, but Mrs. Featherstone is not an able exponent of this.

"I want to tell you," she says, "all about our Easter outing. We are all going in a *coach*—it's so jolly," she says, "to be going in a coach. Now our Easter outing is on April the—now let me see, April 2nd is Good Friday, and 3rd is Saturday, the 4th is—April the 5th is our Easter Monday outing. I can never think," she said, "why it is that Easter has to move, whereas Christmas can stay where it is. Yet Easter moves about each year. Its something to do with the moon. I can never understand it myself, but our outing is on April 5th. Now I want to make it quite *clear* to you about getting your tickets. I am not quite sure how much they are, I haven't got the details, but they are either for 5s. or 7s. 6d., it will be one or the other. I want you to bring your money for the tickets next week and I will have them ready, or if I haven't them ready I am quite sure someone else will have them ready, and I shall be standing at the front, or maybe at the back, at any rate I shall be somewhere or someone else will, and you can all obtain your tickets.

"Now next week's Tuesday Bright Hour will be on a Friday! It's rather unfortunate but the Church is being renovated and we women are so *unselfish*, we women are the first to give up our day, so our Tuesday Bright Hour will be on a Friday next week, but the next week it's much better because the Tuesday Bright Hour will be on a *Wednesday* and that is much easier to remember. Now our speaker next week has fallen through—I'm sure she

couldn't help it, but never mind I am sure it is a blessing in disguise, because Mrs. Grimshaw herself is going to be our speaker."

Then we go back to Mrs. Grimshaw, who announces the speaker. We have a lot of chat about how important it is that speakers should be properly announced and I give an illustration of how the speakers ought not to be announced.

Mrs. Grimshaw sadly tells us that our speaker was to have been Dr. Phyllis Murphy, but as it happens she is unable to come, and Dr. George Basham is with us; we had hoped of course that Dr. Phyllis would have come, but Dr. George Basham is here and he is going to talk about women's medical training and we have to remember that he is a doctor even if he is not a lady.

"And now", says Mrs. Grimshaw, "let's all listen patiently to Dr. Basham, and when you come to the end of your address, Dr. Basham, I hope that you will finish us off with prayer, because the ladies will want to hurry home to make up for lost time."

After this, of course, follows a spirited discussion in which we find all the things that have been wrong in the demonstration, and we have a great many constructive suggestions about how a woman's meeting should be run. We go over a great many practical points such as choosing a suitable speaker, how to make the singing bright and how to vary the programme.

We also have a demonstration from time to time on how not to run a girls' class. Of course these things have to be heard to be appreciated, but this is the demonstration of the girls' class.

HOW NOT TO RUN A GIRLS' CLASS

As demonstrated by Miss Claudia Miller

Now let's see, just about ten past three. I think we'd better make a start and not wait for any more. After all, we do like to start punctually for our three o'clock Bible class, don't we? Now, I think we'll start with some choruses, shall we? Oh! no books? Oh, they're just in the case at the back there; Mary, perhaps you'd like to pass them along, dear, that's right and, you know, put a bundle at each end. That's quicker, isn't it? And while she's giving them out we'll have a few suggestions of numbers and then we shall all be ready to start when we've got the books,

shan't we? 165, yes, that's right, that will be fine. Yes, I think that's a nice one. Oh, 430—oh, I'm afraid that's in Book Two and we haven't yet been able to get Book Two, have we? Well now, perhaps someone could choose another one, would you? Yes, that's right, number 1, "A little talk with Jesus," yes, of course, we can have that one, can't we? that will be fine. Yes, splendid, fine. Yes, now I think after our prayer, I think we'd better have a hymn. Now the one I've chosen this week is number 27 and that's "Souls of men, why will ye scatter". Er, Shirley, will you just play it through on the piano and then everybody will know the tune and we can start, and although there are only just a few of us, well, we can make the noise of many, can't we? Well, Shirley, just play the tune. Oh, well, Shirley, I think we'll have the tune—you know, um, la, la-la, la, la-la, la, la. What, dear? Oh, you were playing that, oh well, perhaps we can manage it. Then you'll start off and we'll see what we can do.

Now, our Scripture Reading. I do hope, girls, that you all are reading your Scripture Union. It is so important for you young girls growing up to read regularly, *every* morning, your Scripture Union. So now we're going to read about the ten virgins, so will you turn over to, um, er, just turn over, will you, to um, well, I wonder if any of you can tell me where we find the story of the ten virgins. Can you? Matthew 25, that *was* quick of you, Penny, now—what? Oh, it was in this morning's Scripture Union, oh yes, of course, yes, yes, well, we'll all read it through, shall we? Yes, now that was very nice.

Now we're very fortunate this afternoon because Wendy has promised to sing for us. Come along, Wendy, I did ask you, didn't I? Oh, I'm sure I did. Janet? Oh oh, Mary, was it you, dear, I asked? Next week? Oh well, never mind, I'm sure you could manage it, couldn't you? Just sing something simple, dear. You know, that's right, come and be a brick and sing for us, I know I've dropped a few bricks but you can sing, can't you, that's right. Very nice, dear. Lovely voice she's got, hasn't she?

Now we're going to have our talk. Well, I'm going on about the Bible, and you know we were thinking about the different things that's said about the Bible, weren't we? Now this week I've chosen a verse where it says about the Bible being like honey and during the week I was reading in the *Reader's Digest* all about honey and how the bees prepare it and make it; it was fascinating so I've brought the cutting along for you from the *Reader's Digest* and, er, it will be so helpful for our subject this afternoon so I'm going to read you that first and then we'll get on to the other part from the Scripture. Now let's see, where is that page from the *Reader's Digest?* No, no, that's not it. That's funny. Is it in the hymn book, I wonder. Oh well, it's a pity,

isn't it; never mind, we'll just have to do the best we can without it and just turn to the Bible, won't we? Yes, well, er, never mind, perhaps next week I'll be able to find it for you. Talking about next week, we're going to have a visiting speaker next week. I've just forgotten her name at the moment, but I've got the subject written down. It's, um, what's this? "Porridge and the cautious"! My writing isn't very good—er, "corridge," oh "Marriage." "Marriage and the Christian girl." So next week, Miss (I've remembered her name now)—Miss Joiner will be here: she'll be able to tell all you Christian girls how to get married.

I think I enjoy the Homemakers' Conference almost more than any other Conference because they are so appreciative about the food! They are all so delighted to get away from having to plan their own meals, that I think if we provided them with just kippers and tapioca they would think it was wonderful.

A VERY happy innovation since we moved to Frinton has been the founding of the Annual Bible Convention. Frinton, like most seaside towns, has its special weeks. There is Tennis Week, Battle of Britain Week, and now we have instituted Bible Convention Week.

It is not just a Hildenborough Hall effort, but a united effort of the Protestant Churches, and certainly demonstrates to the town the denominational unity that exists. It is really genuine unity. There is a monthly prayer meeting held in one of the three places of worship; and when it is at the Gospel Hall it may be taken by the Rev. Edgar Wright from the Free Church, and when at the Parish Church, by a member of the Brethren Assembly, and the Rector will often preside when the Free Church are giving hospitality.

For a week in July different speakers are invited to give a devotional message in the evening and to stay to the next day and give a morning Bible Reading. Many visitors come to the town specially to attend the Convention; parties come in from the district round about, and our Hildenborough party in residence attend in force.

It is a Convention with no particular stress or burden, just a Bible Convention when messages of exhortation and encouragement with a real challenge are given, and in the morning delectable spiritual food is served at the Bible Reading.

For two years out of the three Conventions that have already been held, one of the speakers has been the Rev. George Duncan. His talk this year was on St. Luke, chapter XI, speaking of the Sins of the Religious. I include it here so that you can share the very real help that was enjoyed at our Convention.

THE REV. GEORGE B. DUNCAN

Reading: Luke XI, 37–54

I wonder how often when people said to you, "How are you today?" you have replied quite untruthfully, "Very well,

thank you." But as a matter of fact you were not a bit well, your rheumatism was more troublesome than usual, or possibly you had had a very bad night and had got a bit of a headache, and yet you replied politely, "Very well, thank you!" But if somebody should come up and ask you, "Spiritually, how are you?" I wonder how many of us would dare to say, "Very well, thank you." So one of the notes that always has to be emphasised in a Convention is the aspect of Christian failure. That is not always a very pleasant experience. I believe that is one reason why you can find many keen Christian people who are perfectly willing to support an evangelistic campaign, but are not prepared to go along to a Convention. If you go along to a Campaign or an evangelistic Mission you know that you are safe, you are outside the target area for the preacher. When you go along to a Convention you find that the shells are falling all round you, and that God's Word is coming home to your own heart with power.

Sins of the Religious

I believe that here in Luke XI from verse 37 to the end we have Jesus Christ laying His finger on those aspects of failure which are peculiarly possible and likely in the life of the religious man. I am deliberately using that word "religious" because Jesus was talking to religious people, not to Christians. But I would like to think that a Christian was a religious man, although every religious person is not necessarily a Christian, and I hope that I am right in assuming that everybody here is truly a Christian. Not that you are religious, but that you are regenerate. Are you truly regenerate? Have you been born again of the Spirit of God? For if you have not been born again of the Spirit of God you are not a Christian, whether you go to Church every Sunday of your life or not. There are certain realms of failure which are peculiarly likely in Christian living, and I want to look at the six which Jesus Christ mentions here, and each of them is introduced by the little words "Woe unto you".

Stressing the Unimportant

First of all, if we look at verse 42 we find that Jesus Christ says that there is a peculiar danger in the religious life of stressing the unimportant. "But woe unto you, Pharisees!

for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." "Ye tithe mint and rue . . . and pass over judgment and the love of God." Have you come across Christian people—maybe you, yourself are one, and maybe I am too—who have been most fastidiously exact over details, but when it comes to the larger issues of the love of God and Christian living they have been extraordinarily indifferent? I have come across Christian men and they have become most excited and most disturbed, and indeed very angry, if you deviated in the teeniest little bit from their interpretation of prophecy, but at the same time they could carry along with them into their social contacts a most ungovernable temper. It does not seem to worry them that they were notorious men with outrageous tempers, and yet when it came to details, oh! they were fastidiously exact! I wonder which is more important. Let's be very careful lest we become Pharisees in stressing the unimportant and ignoring the really big issues of life. Jesus said that was peculiarly a danger of the Pharisees.

It may not be in the realm of conduct, it may be in the realm of creed. I do not give one inch in what I call the fundamental faith of the Christian Church. I believe with all my heart in the Deity of Jesus Christ, in the authority of His Word, in the sufficiency of His sacrifice on the Cross, in the miracle of His indwelling by the Holy Spirit, in the hope of His coming again in Glory. I believe in these things absolutely, with my whole heart. But I am not going to get very excited about *how* people worship. If you like to have a Band, as in the Salvation Army, and you love that, I say have your Band. If you like a service full of dignity and beauty, have your liturgy, provided that it is Scriptural. If you believe that ordinary lay folk should take part in Christian worship and fellowship, have your assembly. But for pity's sake, do not think that because a person does not worship as you do he is somewhat out of it as far as God is concerned. Don't let's be Pharisees in stressing the unimportant and ignoring the tremendous realities of the grace of God, and the work of God, and the will of God, and the glory of God. Don't be a Pharisee, tithing mint and rue so fastidiously—the least of all the herbs—passing over judgment and the love of God. Don't let's make any mistake, Jesus did not say that details

were to be ignored. He was most exact. He went on to say, "These ought ye to have done." Don't ignore the details, but don't stress them out of proportion.

Seeking the Unmerited

Here's another "Woe" in verse 43. "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets." Here is another sin of the religious. The first, stressing the unimportant, the second, seeking the unmerited. For I believe that is what our Lord is suggesting —"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets," and you don't deserve them. I believe, don't you, that there is a very subtle danger in the religious life of a Christian in seeking the unmerited. For there is such a thing as position and prominence and influence in the work of the Church, even if it is chairing the women's meeting! Mind you, it does not get into the national newspapers, but it gets into the language of the local church and the gossip and talk of the folk. And you know there is a very, very subtle danger when we want prominence, when we want power, when we want position, when we want influence. We want something we are not fit for, because we have not come to the place where we are prepared to pay the price of power. I wonder how far you are coveting position, are coveting prominence, are coveting applause, are coveting recognition, and all the time we are utterly indifferent as to whether or not we deserve it, whether we merit it, whether we have earned it, whether we have paid the price for it, whether we can really carry it through. I do not know anything more pathetic than to see a Christian in a position that he or she cannot carry out. They have not got the calibre, they have not got the spiritual grace, they have not got the spiritual spirit that they want to get there, and they work to get there, and they plan to get there, and they have got there. Jesus said, "Woe unto you, for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets" and you have no right to be there.

Concealing the Unworthy

So you and I can be Pharisees if we stress the unimportant, if we seek the unmerited, and we can be Pharisees if we con-

ceal the unworthy. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." That is really where it all started. Men making clean the outside of the cup and platter, but the inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. The Pharisee here, Jesus says, is a man who is concerned with carrying a thing off outwardly, yet is not a bit concerned with what is really happening inwardly. Here is a grave, which is a smooth bit of grass and turf on the outside, but beneath is corruption. Sometimes you and I are concerned primarily with our appearance before other Christians—what people will think of us in Church, and we put on our keen Christian attitude when we walk out of the front door. We do not have it on in the house. We would not like people to hear us talk outside as we do at home. That tone of voice maybe a daughter would use to her mother is not quite the same tone as she would use to her minister.

Years ago at Keswick I remember dear old W. W. Martin saying: "If your thoughts were written on your faces would you want to wear a veil?" Have you ever had this kind of experience? You are out to tea with somebody, and you hear the gate click and you turn and look out of the window, and there is a lady coming up. Your hostess says: "Oh, bother it! it's that wretched woman again!" Then she goes out of the door and answers the front door, and you hear: "Oh, good afternoon, my dear. How very nice of you to call." I know we think that is amusing, and it is, but it is tragically true. I do not suggest for one moment that she should say: "You wretched woman, what are you doing coming to see me?" but she ought never to have felt it in her own heart and in her own home. They said something very wonderful about our Lord's robe, that seamless robe. It was seamless, it was woven of one piece throughout, and your Christian character, my Christian character, ought to be woven of one piece throughout, so that when people meet you in Church and meet you in the home, meet you in the office, meet you in the school, meet you in the hospital ward, meet you on the playing field, on the tennis court, on the hockey field, in the club —wherever they meet you, you ought to have the same ring.

Preaching the Unfulfilled

Concealing the unworthy, stressing the unimportant, seek-

ing the unmerited, then it seems to get a bit hotter as it goes on. I feel that this is hot enough myself, but look at verse 46 —"Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." What does that suggest to you? It suggests to me that the sin of the Pharisee lies also in preaching the unfulfilled. "Ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." That is to say, you are perfectly happy to lay a load on others and you yourselves are not carrying the load. How many of you are Sunday School teachers, Bible Class leaders, lay preachers? Tell me this: don't you find it easier to preach or give a talk about prayer than to pray? Isn't it easier to urge your Crusader Class, your Bible Class, your Youth Fellowship, your Christian Endeavour, your Nurses' Fellowship—isn't it easier to tell them that they have got to consecrate themselves utterly to the will of God, to tell them what they have got to do, but then not to bother very much whether you are doing it yourselves? That is the Pharisee. "Loading men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

I wonder whether it has come even closer to us. How many of us who are Christians accuse the unconverted worldling of being disobedient to the truth of God, while all the time we ourselves are disobeying the will of God in some aspect or another, and carrying in our lives a reservation concerning the will of God. And we as Christians have all the experience of God's grace and God's faithfulness—if anybody should obey the truth it is me, it is you, a Christian. And yet we are laying upon the unconverted man the burdens of obedience, and we are not carrying them ourselves: preaching the unfulfilled.

Reverencing the Unwanted

Verse 47—"Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them." In St. Matthew's account I believe that it says, "You decorate and ornament the tombs of the prophets and your fathers killed them", and Jesus is implying that you yourself would kill him, if they were here. But because they are not, because they lived and died hundreds of years ago, you decorate and lay flowers on their tomb. That is another sin of the Pharisee, reverencing

the unwanted. Reverencing the unwanted. Jesus cried saying, You reverence the tombs of the prophets and you reverence the traditions of the past, but if a prophet came along you would treat him as your fathers did. You would kill him.

I sometimes think of some churches that have known great traditions of great preaching. I think of a church in Edinburgh where the great Dr. Alexander Whyte, that Prince of Scottish preachers, exercised such a tremendous ministry, a man who knew more of the human heart, I think, than any other preacher. Dr. Whyte was followed by Hugh Black, and then followed by James Black, and they said that two Blacks never made a Whyte! But sometimes it happens that in the history of a church a great saint of God comes and ministers and builds up a tremendous tradition, and he dies and then years pass and you get some folk talking about the great days of Dr. Whyte. I wonder, you know, whether a congregation today would really want him. He preached, I suppose, to the most cultured and influential congregation that any church in Scotland has ever known. That was thirty, forty years ago. I wonder whether any church in Scotland or in England today could stand a ministry like Dr. Whyte's. It is all very well to reverence that which is conveniently remote. Sometimes we wish for revival, but I wonder whether, if it really came near, we would want it. It is all right to pray for revival as long as it stays away. The sin of reverencing the unwanted—Pharisees.

Hindering the Unenlightened

And then there is just one other "Woe" in verse 52: "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." The final sin of the Pharisee is seen in hindering the unenlightened. "Ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourself, and them that were entering in ye hindered." The final sin of the Pharisee is that he gets in the way. Notice that Jesus assumes that there are people entering in, there are people wanting to go in, and I believe with all my heart that there are far more people wanting to enter the Kingdom than we ever believe, than we ever realise. Jesus said the final sin of the Pharisee is that he himself has not entered in. He has taken away the key of

knowledge. He has not gone in himself, and he is standing right in the way of others who are trying to get in, but who cannot get in, who cannot get past him. I wonder how many people in their desire to enter into the Christian experience have found that the one obstacle that they have not been able to get past is just you and me. They talk about becoming Christians, they have wondered about it, maybe to our great amazement even, if we knew it. They have prayed about it. They even watched us intently, because they knew that we were Christians and we go to church, and we go to meetings, and we come to conferences and talk about it. We have got the vocabulary, we have got the jargon, we can explain the way, we can give our testimony, we can tell them the Way of Salvation, we can give them a tract.

Our unreliability, our unpunctuality, our touchiness, our falseness, these things get in the way and prevent them from becoming Christians. One of the things that comes to me with a sense of utter humiliation is this: if God in His amazing grace condescended in some small way to use my life to lead other people to Jesus Christ, I wonder how many people I have put off. I do not believe that God's trouble is with the world, do you? The heart of man has not changed. God's greatest problem is with His own church, those of us who have taken away the key of knowledge, and the one thing people cannot get past in order to enter the Kingdom is just you and me, if we are Pharisees.

God gave me that word some time ago. A special retreat was held for speakers at Keswick, and I was just a very young man, and I was asked if I would speak in the intimacy and the close contact of a sitting room to men who were of a spiritual stature that I knew that I could never possibly hope to attain to. I was asked to address people like that, and I remember going into my bedroom and kneeling down and saying: "Lord what can I say?" And I turned up this passage and I found that the thing that really mattered at that moment was not anything that I had to say to men who were better Christians than I would ever be, but the thing that really mattered at that moment was something that God had to say to me, and this is what He said. If I called you a Pharisee you would not like it, but I tell you this, that morning by my bedside God called me a Pharisee. I wonder whether He has called you one tonight. We have got to begin

there in the Convention with all the failures and the sins that are peculiarly the sins and the failures of the religious. It is not easy to get rid of the Pharisee, but it is my heart's prayer for you that as the fulness of God's grace is opened up to you through His Word, in a risen and living Christ dwelling in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that in the measure by which that life becomes evident, so the life of the Pharisee may gradually and wonderfully be withdrawn, so that when people meet you, and they meet me, they won't think that we are Pharisees, but they will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. May it be so for His Name's sake.

19 Of the Making of Books

SOMEBODY once said to me recently, "What do you most dislike about the guests who come to Hildenborough?" That was rather putting me on the spot, wasn't it? So I stopped to think. I must say, I dislike grumblers; I dislike grumblers on the staff and I dislike grumblers as guests. Particularly grumblers who won't grumble to you, but will only grouse behind your back. But we do not get many of these. I dislike the kind of guest who is quite happy to go up the town and pay a shilling for a cream cake and ninepence for a cup of coffee, but will come to our coffee shop and because we are a Christian place, say "What? 5d. for a cup of coffee, what a price!" And the kind of guest who pays his fees somewhat resentfully, saying: "I could have gone to the Continent for that." Or the kind of guest who wrote a letter not so long ago and wanted the very best accommodation with private bathroom at the very busiest week in the year, but said, "I am a Christian worker, so I expect you to let me come at half price, because if you do not do so you will have to answer at the judgment seat for charging a poor Christian worker like myself for a little luxury on holiday." No, I don't think there is very much I dislike about guests. I like people in the mass and I like them individually. Then there is always this, if someone behaves in a particularly disagreeable manner, I say to myself, "My, what a wonderful person to put in a book." Of course, I disguise them quite a little bit, but it is a wonderful way of relieving your feelings when anybody is awkward.

And talking about books, people often say, "when do you find time to write your books?" I never *find* time to write books, I have to *make* time. I never thought about writing books until the war, when Messrs. Pickering and Inglis, who published Tom's first book, *His Touch Has Still Its Ancient Power,* said there was a shortage of children's books of the old-fashioned kind which had a clear gospel message, and it

was suggested that I should try writing one. I had always made up stories, being the second eldest in a family of seven. I could never remember a time when I wasn't in demand for telling a story. I used to take my younger brothers and sisters out for walks and we always had a story on hand, but I had never thought about writing one down before, and so I wrote my first book *Carol and Co.*, which I think has had a greater sale than any of my other books and has just gone into yet another edition. I don't know how many young people I have heard of who have told me that they were converted through reading that book as a child. I got such a lot of help from books myself with a good story and message, that I knew this to be a good medium. In many ways it would be easier to write stories without a message, leaving out the gospel, but there are so many hundreds of books written for children, and I have only one life to live, so I want to put something in each book that will make spiritual truth plain, without being merely pious.

I have had five children's books published, and two more are on the way. I find that it is useful having children of my own because I try the story on them, and if the words are too long they can tell me and I change them, and if the story appeals to them, I know it will appeal to other children. But I think the greatest enjoyment I have is writing a Christian novel, and here it is necessary for me to get right away into a congenial atmosphere. I go away with a secretary and two Stenorettes, which as you know are small dictating machines, and I get an idea of the main plot and I start telling the story into the machine. I find it most interesting to see how the story develops. I am as excited as anyone to see how the plot will go, and when he will propose, and whether she will have him or not, and how the mother-in-law will react, and how they'll cope with this situation. All kinds of surprising things happen in the story that I never expected. A number of situations come into my mind, dialogue and things that I never knew were there. It was when I was in Florida that I wrote a book called *Madame Estelle*. I had no secretary there and I had to borrow a portable typewriter to type it myself, reading a chapter each night to Tom and Jennifer (who was also with us). Any time I write anything about a husband, Tom is always quite convinced that I am hitting at him. In *Madame Estelle* I wrote about a husband who was very organ-

ising in the home and harassed his poor wife by telling her how she should do the housework. I read this chapter aloud to them both reading how "Bertie" deplored his wife's lack of system in the kitchen. "If only she cleared the pots and pans away as she went," he said. The poor wife was running around in circles with worry. That evening Jennifer and I were doing the wash-up, but I am afraid my method is always to wash what comes first, and I find if you have a method, it takes you all your time to plan your method, and you could have it all washed up by the time you have got your system going. However, as we were washing up Tom came in and started to say, "Now if only you would just stack all the things . . ." and then he stopped in the middle of his sentence and quietly stole from the kitchen. We said nothing for a moment and then Jennifer said, "Mummy, do you think when I'm grown up and I get married that I could write books?"

It was when I was in America that time I was horrified by a great deal of the publicity and build-up that were given to certain missions. Some I saw ran something like this:

"In Evangelist Blank's Campaigns in other places there have been great results.
In Main Town there were 200 House Prayer Meetings and 1,000 registered decisions.
In Townville there were 400 House Prayer Meetings and 4,000 registered decisions.
In Bostington there were 1,000 House Prayer Meetings and 3,000 registered decisions.
And now here in our town of Phillimore, can we do better than that?
Our target is 2,000 House Prayer Meetings and 10,000 registered decisions."

As if immortal souls could be won by competition!

This was more like a political campaign than the Lord's work, and a great deal of this got into my book, and in *Madame Estelle* I describe a mission that was a failure merely because a great deal was done from a wrong motive.

It is quite true in books when it says at the beginning that "Characters in this book are entirely fictitious and have no relation to people in real life." In a sense it is quite true, but on the other hand one must realise that the only place authors

get ideas is from the people they meet, and a great many ideas must go into one's subconscious mind and then come out, and when one has five thousand different people staying in the house each year it certainly provides one with some rare material! But the amazing thing is that people never seem to recognise themselves. I have had an awful moment once or twice when people have said "You put me in your latest book," and knowing there is some truth in this I falter, "Who do you think you were like," and they mention somebody quite different, that has no bearing upon them at all. On this same holiday in Florida, when I had been reading a chapter aloud each night, Jennifer and Tom were having a walk along the beach. Jennifer produced a profound remark. "Don't you think, Daddy," she said, "that Mummy's very clever." Tom cautiously said, "In what particular way do you mean?" "Well, the way she writes books," said Jennifer. Tom, who had just finished writing *The Spirit of Life,* and didn't like to be outdone, said, "Well, I've just written a book, don't you think I'm very clever?" "Oh yes," said Jennifer, "but then you had the Lord to help you. Mummy writes her books without any help from the Lord whatsoever." Which is rather trying when I do try so hard to have a definite message from the Lord in all the books I write.

But I suppose Jennifer felt that a theological work could have more special help than drawing on the imagination. I wish Tom had more time to write books. His book *The Spirit of Life* has been a tremendous help to all those who have read it. Before writing it we were literally inundated at conferences and by letters with questions concerning the person and work of the Holy Spirit, questions concerning the gift of the Spirit, speaking with tongues, receiving the baptism of the Spirit, the fulness of the Spirit, and in the end Tom said, "I really must write a book on this subject," and so we went away down to Brighton for a fortnight and Tom wrote his book *The Spirit of Life,* and I wrote my book *The Lady with the Sunlamp*. The letters that Tom has received since, not only from young people but from older people, too, have proved that the time spent there at Brighton was very worth while. He thinks clearly and can explain clearly, making a profound subject seem simple rather than making a simple subject sound profound.

SOME people fondly imagine that when the summer season is over the staff go into hibernation until the following season comes round, but this is by no means the case. First we have a period when the Hall is open for private guests just like any hotel, but with a difference. Not only do we lay on the usual winter attractions such as central heating, good fires and good food, but we have a minister and his wife each week acting as host and hostess to take morning prayers and make everyone feel at home.

Then we have private conferences; and what a very wide variety of Christian work is represented. Not only all manner of Christian Unions; Post Office, Bank of England and others, but also Missionary societies, Parish weekends, private parties of workers, Sunday School Teachers' and Ministers' Conferences. We have found these more satisfactory since we moved to Frinton, where our accommodation is so much more suitable. Whereas we had to offer dormitory accommodation, now the majority can occupy double and single rooms, which is so much more satisfactory when at these conferences many of the guests are, to say the least of it, not teenagers!

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I must tell you about a very interesting conference we had recently; another like unto it is already being planned. It was a conference for British Evangelists. I think everyone was invited who is engaged in full-time Evangelism, and a hundred arrived. What a wonderful crowd of people they were; they came from all over the British Isles and we had some representatives from Eire to keep us on our toes. Some of these latter are working in dark Roman Catholic districts where there is not only opposition but often active persecution. They need patience and get very little limelight. But men like Johnny Cochrane, working with the City of Dublin Y.M.C.A., five feet of consecrated Irish wit and spirituality, will get such heavy crowns when they get to heaven that they'll have a

heavenly headache, and when some of the big names on earth are making do with bungalows up there, Johnny will be living in an outsized mansion!

There was a most remarkable spirit of fellowship and unity. Difficulties were discussed, and although encouragements were recounted, problems were not by-passed, but brought freely into the light.

I wish it were possible to print in full the three morning talks that were given by Dr. W. E. Sangster on "The Preacher and his Message", the Rev. Dick Rees on "Evangelism and the Church", and the Rev. Stephen Olford on "The Holy Spirit in Evangelism", but I must give you one excerpt from Dr. Sangster on the vexed question of emotion:

"Evangelical preaching appeals to the whole man—his mind and his emotions. Do we need to use much time on this? We have, all of us as evangelists, had to stand up to the type of criticism offered that we are over-emotional. Some people doubt any conversion that doesn't take place in a refrigerator! I have never known, in my limited experience, more than two or three instances of people that really overdid things on the emotional side. You will know more of them. But the common idea that all we evangelists are wholesale dealers in emotions seems to me to be false. You can't dissect the person of man and say 'I am only going to appeal to the mind and the will, and cut out feeling'.

"Does a fellow proposing to a girl say, 'I want you to marry me, but don't let's have any misunderstanding about it. I have not any feelings.' Imagine a fellow proposing to a girl like that! The lunacy of it!

"It seems to me ludicrous in this age that sport has almost become a religion in the masses of the people—20,000 men scream their heads off because the ball goes this way instead of that way! The disproportion of the whole thing! But because they hear that some sinner comes to the Cross with years of sin upon him, has heard of the Saviour and comes down the aisle, bursts into tears at the Communion rail, they talk about 'emotion'. You will appeal to the feelings of people, for God made them so.

"It appeals to the will. Each aspect of personality—mind, feeling and will—because that belief of the mind, that reasoning of the truth and that touching of the heart has to move their will. That's what we want to do. Maybe they don't always come down the hall, or stand up, or lift their hand, but we at least believe in giving the opportunity of making public their will to give their heart to God. We want their will to move.

"Evangelical preaching appeals to the whole person as I under-

stand it. To the mind, the heart and the will. Bring the message in such a way that it will appeal to the whole man."

In concluding he said six things about evangelical preaching. Here they are:

"Evangelical preaching is about God in Christ.
Evangelical preaching is an offer and not a demand.
Evangelical preaching is not full life for scant life, but life for death.
Evangelical preaching appeals to the whole man—mind, emotion and will.
Evangelical preaching combines the old and the new.
Evangelical preaching is understood by plain people."

I remember a speaker telling us at a Conference that it is a well-known psychological fact that it is impossible to reach a really big decision without the expending of a certain amount of emotion.

The late Lord Rochester, speaking for us at the Central Hall, said, "Young people, do not be afraid of emotion. Some of our biggest ships can only go in and out of harbour at full tide."

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Many subjects were discussed and the question of publicity was raised. One and all agreed that the recent large-scale Crusades had demonstrated beyond a doubt that it pays to advertise. Of course, the point was made that in this country funds were not available for such wide-scale advertising.

Jack Ward warned us to be careful to scrutinise the publicity before approving it. He himself had suffered considerable embarrassment on finding himself billed to follow a film concerning the woman with the alabaster box of ointment. The notice ran "A WOMAN TO REMEMBER, FOLLOWED BY JACK WARD." Dr. Sangster capped this with the story of a disappointed congregation he addressed, where he had been billed as "Gangster" instead of "Sangster"!

The Rev. Ronald Wallace, of Lanark, made a wise remark. He said that though thrift was considered a virtue in Scotland, it was sometimes a hindrance, and Christian people were unwilling to spend enough on publicity, thinking this was a virtue instead of a definite hindrance to the work.

David Shepherd, of Wales, talking about large sums spent

on advertising, illustrated it by telling of a gadget he had once seen for fitting windscreen wipers on spectacles, but in order to work this the wearer had to carry an enormous battery on his back. He wondered if the large expense was always justified.

Personally, as I looked round the room full of such gifted men, I couldn't help coveting enormous sums to spend on publicity so that they could get the audiences they deserve. With such men of prayer and gifts, what couldn't be accomplished if we gave and sacrificed as we should and really "went to town" on building them up and "magnifying the Lord's servants in the eyes of the people—so that they might magnify Him."

Which reminds me of a little rhyme:

The codfish lays a million eggs,
The little hen but one,
But the codfish doesn't cackle
To tell us what she's done.

So we despise the codfish
And the little hen we prize,
Which all reveals to thoughtful minds
It pays to advertise!

I always remember Johnny Cochrane's prayer after this discussion when he humbly told the Lord, "Some of us, Lord, even if we should be advertised with streamers from aeroplanes, would never draw more than six people!"

It was inevitable, of course, that the subject of Revival should be raised. Mr. Lindsay Glegg said that Holy Ghost revival and successful evangelism were as different as chalk from cheese. He spoke from personal experience of the Welsh revival, where, he told us, people were stricken down by an Outside Agency. In those days people were convicted of sin in the streets and places of amusement. He instanced how a boxer in a prize fight was convicted of sin during the fight, and rushed out to a prayer meeting to find out how to get right with God. His opponent also rushed out to the prayer meeting and before the manager could follow and reach either of them, it was too late, they were both converted! "This was something different," he said; "we have experienced nothing like this in recent years."

Major Alistair Smith said that evangelism applies to the

unconverted and revival to the Church. Great interest in evangelism does not mean revival in the Church.

Mr. Blake-Lobb said there was danger in calling symptoms revival.

In summing up this discussion, Tom, as Chairman of the Conference, said that he had learnt all he knew of evangelism from such men as Lionel Fletcher, Gypsy Smith, and W. P. Nicholson. One of the most important lessons he ever learned was from W. P. Nicholson, who always made it a practice to speak to Christians first before starting evangelism. Speaking first on holy, living prayer, and carnality, Tom said that he himself had found it a waste of time to start preaching where the Christians were dead and worldly. A praying Church with a poor preacher was more powerful than a carnal Church with a gifted preacher. When Christians adjust their lives, then God can work.

It was certainly a memorable five days and an occasion soon to be repeated. I think the most encouraging thing was to find that everyone was having the same difficulties and problems. Souls are hardly won. The easy victory is not the real victory. The way of evangelism in this country is tough.

We had been talking about all the difficulties, the indifference and non-co-operation of ministers and clergy, the apathy in the Church, and summing up I must quote another Irishman, Arthur Reyner. He said:

"Jesus said we should put our hand to the plough, but if he were here today, He might well say, put your hand to the bulldozer!"

21 Remembering a Face

I LISTENED to a programme on the radio the other day entitled "I always forget a face." An actress explained that she was incapable of remembering even people whom she knew well. I think remembering names is much worse than remembering faces. We have such a large number of people coming for the first time to Hildenborough, and it is terribly difficult to remember names, though I must say I do remember a surprising lot about people. Such funny things stick in my mind. A guest arrives and I astonish them by saying,

"Oh yes, last time you came you sat at table number six and you were in room number eleven, but on your previous visit to the old Hildenborough you were in number five." While they are gasping at how much I remember, I'm terrified it will dawn on them that I can't for the life of me think of their name!

One of our nightmares is that we shall say to a guest who we think has just arrived, "Have you travelled far to-day?" and that they will say, "I was here all last week."

We have a joke we tell against each other. A hostess says to a new arrival, "Haven't I seen your face somewhere else?" and the girl replies rather vacantly, "No, I always keep it in the same place."

I think Tom is really worse at remembering people than I am. I will never forget some years ago we were staying in Ireland. We were entertained to tea at a delightful house and given a really scrumptious spread, raspberries and cream and all manner of cakes, and our hostess made our party delightfully welcome. At the meeting that night a lady said to Tom after his address,

"It has been nice hearing you again, Mr. Rees," and he looked at her politely and said,

"Let me see; where was it we met?" and she said rather acidly,

"You had tea at my house this afternoon."

The other day in the office we found a box of group photos going right back to the first year of conferences. We pored over them squeaking with excitement at how young we all looked twelve years ago and how many grey hairs and extra inches we had acquired.

It was wonderful to look back and recall people who came for the first time and who are now on the mission field.

"Why, there is Dr. Mary Eldridge," said Joyce. "Do you remember she was converted at the Albert Hall and now she is out at Ludhiana in India. Yes, and there's Edna Bourne. She's at the Kinnaird Hospital, Lucknow. Look at Josephine Roberts. Do you remember when she first came down to Hildenborough?"

We did. Josephine had been persuaded by a patient she had been nursing to go to an Albert Hall Rally. She wasn't really interested. She had tried religion, first being brought up as a Roman Catholic, then as a Jehovah's Witness, but it had not worked. However, all alone at the Albert Hall, she stood to her feet to show that she had accepted Christ. That was the beginning. I remember her so well coming down to a weekend conference for new converts. A cashier in an office, Olive Arnold, shared a room with her.

Fred Preston was another. A boy who today would be called a "Teddy Boy", then a "Cosh boy", who had gone in for violence and theft, but had been persuaded by a girl friend to go to a rally. He had come in late, clattering his football boots on the ground and in a friendly way offering peanuts to all those within reach.

It seemed funny to look at their photos and to realise what has happened since then. Josephine has been the means of the conversion of her brother and his wife, and her mother, and is now in India with the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. Fred has finished his training to enter the Church of England ministry. Olive has been a steady witness in her job, and at one of our rallies in the Royal Albert Hall, together with the two who were responsible for inviting her to the Rally, she gave her testimony, and was followed by a Jewish girl whom she herself had led to the Lord. The chain lengthens.

Another face we saw was not difficult to recognise, as she is staying with us even as I am writing this. She is home on furlough from Nyasaland with her husband. When she first came she would have been most surprised if we had pre-

dicted such a visit. Mary Knight, now Mary Long, not only was converted at a conference one Whitsun, but subsequently heard the call to overseas service at a later conference.

There was a photo of one of our first teenagers' conferences. A sobering thought to think that many of them now are married and are weighed down with the cares of family!

"Wasn't that the time Penny got converted and had chicken pox?" asked Joyce. She sometimes puts things like that, so we had to sort it out and explain to Beryl Jones (who was not only helping us as pianist, but helping us to waste time looking at photos) that there was no connection but they both had happened in the same week!

It reminds me of a joke we sometimes make. A guest comes to the office with a solemn face and says "I have a serious complaint". The answer is: "Well, if it's infectious, you're going straight home!"

Then someone produced a conference photo with the Rev. J. D. Blinco sitting in the middle as guest speaker. Why is it that one always remembers the funny things? "That was the time," I reminded them, "that Mr. Blinco went down the chute at the baths and ripped his bathing trunks in half." But that wasn't the only thing we remembered. It had been a wonderful conference. Iain Murray had been converted that week. Iain came to several conferences after that, and on one occasion he was acting as an assistant host. A girl arrived and Iain, very willing (as assistant hosts are on their first visit), carried her case and took her upstairs. I gave him a gentle word (he called it a rasp) to say that although he could carry the case I liked one of the hostesses to show the girls up to their rooms. However, it had no ill effects, for not only did the girl get converted during the conference, but later Iain and she were married, and now he is an assistant host no longer, but is assistant minister to Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones at Westminster Chapel.

On a more recent photo someone said, "There's Terry", and we all said with one accord "Drinking shoes!" Terry is a very successful dental surgeon now, but in 1945 he was a dental student at Guy's. At a recent conference he told us that he had been greatly attracted to a nurse at Guy's and was rather hurt that she did not seem very enthusiastic about going out with him. He didn't know then that she was a Christian and

he was not! He tried to persuade her to give him a date and she said,

"Will you do something for me?"

All his knight errantry rose within him, and when she explained that she wanted him to go to the Central Hall, Westminster, and hear a man called Tom Rees, he agreed willingly. He would gladly have gone to Timbuctoo on his hands and knees for her sake, he told us, and though he had never heard of Tom Rees, he was willing to go and hear him.

It was only the first of several visits to that campaign, and subsequently, not for the sake of the nurse, but for his own sake.

At the end of one of the meetings Tom made an appeal for anyone who had accepted Christ to come out to the front. Terry told us,

"I looked down at my feet. I was wearing what my friends are pleased to call my 'drinking shoes'—square toes so that you can get two inches nearer the bar!"—then he told us how that night he had decided, and, wearing his drinking shoes, had publicly confessed Christ. The nurse and he are now married, and of everything evangelistic that is done in his town, he is the doer of it.

Time does not permit to tell in detail of all the others we saw. Of Joyce Rawlings, now training at Ridgelands, converted at the Albert Hall; of Timmie, a nurse who was converted at the Watchnight Service just as 1949 became 1950; of dozens of German young people who came to us suffering from their post-war religious vacuum, but today active Christian workers; of Ralph in Nigeria. Of the numbers of teenagers whose photos are there, who as youngsters received their first vision of a life completely lived for Christ, and who today, though not out on the mission field, maybe are the backbone of their Churches, spending all their spare time in Christian work.

TOM and I often say we enjoy our work, but there are too many sides to it. It would be terrible to have a dull job, but the trouble with our life is, it's *too* interesting. You could "go to town" on any branch of it and really enjoy it. Tom thinks, if only he were *just* a conference director, free to pray, prepare messages, talk with guests and plan the spiritual side, or if only he had just the business side to think of—printing, publicity, finance, managing the properties, supervising the staff, he would really be quite a top line in business managing, or if he were only an evangelist with quiet to prepare for the next campaign, not dashing round the country, seeing ministers about advance publicity, the planning, the printing, and then at the Rallies themselves running the singing, planning the meeting, and then personally conducting the after-meeting and coping with the follow-up. In the States they specialise. The evangelist just has to preach. He has a song leader, a follow-up man, a publicity man, someone to prepare in advance. It has its advantages—and its limitations.

The story is told of an American ringing up an English Evangelist,

"Say, I'm very interested in your work and how you do evangelism over there. You've had some successful campaigns. I'd like if I could get meeting your team. Do you think you could get together your song-leader, publicity man, follow-up chief, finance man, and let me talk to them all?"

To which the British Evangelist replies,

"Of course you can meet them all. Come round now, I'll be right here!"

In Conference Centre work and evangelism I don't think we are meant to be one-track-minded. One of the greatest thoughts that has encouraged me this summer was a brief word given by the Rev. Godfrey Robinson to the staff at the close of a conference. He took as his text Ezekiel I, 10, "Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living

creatures . . . As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

These, he said, are typical of servants of the Lord, and the work needs to be many-sided.

We need the patient endurance and hard work of the bullock, the courage of the lion and the intelligence of a man. But with all that we need something more. We must have the vision of the eagle, who mounts up with wings.

How absolutely true that is of our work. We must not be mounting up all the time, all vision and no practical down-to-earth common sense (so heavenly minded we're no earthly use).

We have had people on the staff, very occasionally, who would cheerfully turn up half an hour late on duty and say with a beatific smile,

"Some of us felt led to have a prayer meeting."

They may have *felt* led, but no one *is* led to neglect their job, even for a prayer meeting. No, we have to have the hard work and endurance of the ox.

Since Mr. Robinson's talk I have often said to Miss Hay on Saturday, when the whole place has to be turned upside down and when by six p.m. she feels as if her feet were three times normal size, "This is one of our bullock days."

But in our work we need to have the courage of a lion. We have to take chances, grasp opportunities, be willing to do pioneering work where needed, as well as the patient plodding. Tom is always getting "Lion" ideas. He has one now that has left me gasping, and one that will take the courage of a lion to carry out, but more than that, the intelligence of a man is needed. All our brains, intellect and executive ability must be put into the job. Getting an idea is one thing, having the courage to put it into operation is another, but it needs the mind stayed on God and consecrated to Him, every thought brought into subjection to His will.

But with all our organisation, courage and hard work, something more still is needed. Without that supernatural force of prayer, abiding in Him, drawing on resources daily from Him, all the rest is useless. We must not forget the eagle. The work built on excellent organisation without prayer, is like a superb racing car without petrol. Ideas for

the sake of it, to be big, to catch the headlines, however much courage they may take, are useless unless there is spiritual vision.

I think perhaps one of the greatest problems we are all up against in full-time Christian work is to keep ourselves fresh spiritually, not only praying for the Lord's help in our work, but actually delighting ourselves in the Lord, getting to know the Lord Himself, having our love for Him increased. The only answer, of course, is complete regularity of prayer time, but that is not easy if one is physically tired and mentally exhausted, but if we delight in the Lord He has promised us that He will give us "desires of heart", and it is "desires of heart after Himself" that I so long for, so that I can say that "all my fresh springs shall be in Thee".

If our motive in serving the Lord is out of a full heart, because we are so thrilled with Him that we cannot help wanting to pass it on to other people, our service will be of an entirely different order.

When we are having our "bullock" days, we tend to get physically tired and discouraged, but when we look up and start to soar right into the presence of the Lord, we get things in their correct perspective. Then we not only look up, but round about near and far, to the far corners of the earth, and at home, and we are compelled to agree that the miracles that the Lord has been doing during these last years are truly Stranger than Fiction.